DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 180 074 EA 012 270

AUTHOR	Sharples, B.: And Others
TITLE	Patterns of School Attendance in Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools.
INSTITUTION	Queen's Univ., Kingston (Ontario).
SPONS AGENCY	Ontario Dept. of Education, Toronto.
PUB DATE	79
NOTE	310p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Ontario Government Bookstore, 880 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M7A 1L2 ($4.00)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC13 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Attendance: *Attendance Patterns: Board of Education Policy: Dropouts: Elementary Secondary Education: Foreign Countries: Relevance (Education): Student Attitudes: Student Characteristics: Student School Relationship: *Truancy
IDENTIFIERS	*Ontario

ABSTRACT

This study examined issues related to student absenteeism in the Ontario schools. Eight elementary and sixteen secondary schools made up the sample. Data were gathered from school attendance records, questionnaires administered to teachers and students, school board policy statements, and interview schedules. Results suggest that a number of factors are related to attendance: satisfaction with school: perception of effectiveness of school policies limiting truancy and class-skipping: success at school: perceived relevance of the school to student interests: and student and teacher attitudes toward absenteeism and class-skipping. No relationship between poor attendance and dropping out was found in the sample schools. The analysis of attendance policies suggests that local school boards have generally not been active in regulating student absenteeism. Most responsibility for regulating attendance appears to rest on the shoulders of principals, who operate without the support of well developed school board attendance regulations. A literature search and the teachers' questionnaires reveal that although teachers favor more enforcement of regulations, experience elsewhere suggests that alternative approaches are more effective. (Author/JM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED180074

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

PATTERNS OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IN ONTARIO ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

B. SHARPLES, Principal Investigator
J.O. LOKEN, Associate Investigator
A.R. MARSHALL, Associate Investigator
L. WHITEHEAD, Associate Investigator
R. PARAGG, Project Director

This research project was funded under contract by the Ministry of Education, Ontario.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

B. Hildebrand

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

EA 012 270

©The Minister of Education, Ontario, 1979
Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, CATALOGUING IN PUBLICATION

Sharples, B.
Patterns of school attendance in Ontario elementary and secondary schools / B. Sharples, principal investigator... et al.

"This research project was funded under Ministry of Education Contract no. 302."

1. School attendance - Ontario. I. Ontario. Ministry of Education. II. Title.

ON01158 371.219713

Additional copies may be ordered from:

The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
Publications Sales
252 Bloor Street West
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 1V6

or

The Ontario Government Bookstore
880 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1L2

This study reflects the views of the authors and not necessarily those of the Ministry of Education.

Abstract

This study examines six issues related to student absenteeism in the Ontario school system: 1) present levels and patterns of school attendance; 2) the relationship between patterns of attendance and selected variables; 3) the relationship between poor attendance and dropping out; 5) local board policies with respect to attendance; and 6) procedures presently employed to monitor patterns of school attendance.

A sample comprising eight elementary and sixteen secondary schools was selected to encompass the range of a number of variables. Data were gathered by the use of four instruments: 1) a student absentee data form on which data regarding absenteeism was gathered from school records; 2) a questionnaire on school attendance which gathered factual and perceptual data from good attenders, poor attenders, and teachers; 3) a request for policies dealing with absenteeism, which was used to gather written policy statements from school boards; and 4) an interview schedule which was used to gather details from school level personnel on school procedures and environment.

As a result of a review of the literature and analysis of the data collected from the schools, a number of conclusions were formulated concerning: levels of absenteeism; patterns of absenteeism both in schools and among students; the relationship between poor attendance and dropping out; characteristics of good attenders; attendance policies and procedures; and strategies for improving school attendance.

No relationship between poor attendance and dropping out was found in the sample schools.

Comparisons of the characteristics of good and poor attenders suggest that a number of factors are related to poor attendance: satisfaction with school and school work; perception of effectiveness of measures to limit truancy and class-skipping; lack of success at school; perceived relevance of school to interest; attitude toward absenteeism and class-skipping.

The survey and analysis of attendance policies suggests that local school boards have generally not been active in the area of regulating student absenteeism. School board policies and procedures indicate a concern with levels of absenteeism rather than with limiting absenteeism. A major part of the decision-making and judgemental responsibility appears to rest on the shoulders of the principals without the support of well developed school board attendance regulations.

Strategies for improving school attendance were derived from teachers' responses to the questionnaire and from reports in the literature. While the teachers favour more effective enforcement of regulations, experience elsewhere suggests alternative approaches.

SPECIAL NOTE

Appendix B of this report contains the statistical tables compiled and used by the researchers. It is available only on microfiche from the Ontario Government Bookstore.

Order "Patterns of School Attendance in Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools. Appendix B." (ONO1613 - $2.00)

MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Sister J. Burns
Principal
Frontenac-Lennox & Addington County
R.C.S.S. School Board

Mr. F. Holmes
Vice-Principal
Kingston Collegiate & Vocational Institute
Frontenac County Board of Education

Mr. J. Kane
Attendance Counsellor
Frontenac-Lennox & Addington County
R.C.S.S. School Board

Mr. W.H. Shaw
Attendance Counsellor
Frontenac County Board of Education

Mr. R. Williams
Principal
Kingscourt Public School
Frontenac County Board of Education

Contents

Page

LIST OF TABLES..... viii

LIST OF FIGURES..... xv

CHAPTER

1. THE PROBLEM OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE..... 1

INTRODUCTION..... 1

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE..... 2

Problems of Definition..... 3

Costs of School Absenteeism..... 5

Reasons for Poor School Attendance..... 7

Patterns of Non-attendance..... 10

Factors in Attendance..... 11

Profile of the Poor Attender..... 17

RESEARCH DESIGN..... 17

Sample Selection..... 17

Research Instruments..... 22

Data Collection Procedures..... 24

Analysis of the Data..... 26

2. LEVELS AND PATTERNS OF ABSENTEEISM - FINDINGS..... 30

PROBLEMS..... 30

FINDINGS..... 30

Levels of Absenteeism..... 30

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools..... 31

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students..... 70

SUMMARY..... 98

Levels of Absenteeism..... 98

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools..... 99

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students..... 100

3. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND DROPOUTS..... 101

CHAPTER Page

4. THE GOOD AND POOR ATTENDER IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS..... 105

INTRODUCTION..... 105

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF POOR ATTENDERS..... 106

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS..... 109

Home Background..... 109

Parent Origins..... 112

Geographic Location of Home..... 114

Aspirations towards Formal Education and Work..... 116

SATISFACTION..... 119

School Satisfaction..... 121

Meaningfulness of School Work..... 122

Internal Work Motivation..... 122

Individual Growth Need Strength..... 124

Teacher Perceptions..... 124

PERCEPTIONS REGARDING ABSENTEEISM AND CLASS-SKIPPING... 125

Attendance Procedures..... 125

Absenteeism..... 128

Class-Skipping..... 130

Levels and Reasons for Absenteeism and Class-Skipping..... 132

5. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IN THE INTERMEDIATE GRADES..... 141

INTRODUCTION..... 141

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF POOR ATTENDERS..... 142

FAMILY BACKGROUND..... 144

LEVELS OF STUDENT SATISFACTION..... 153

PERCEPTIONS REGARDING ATTENDANCE AND CLASS-SKIPPING.... 158

6. BOARD POLICIES AND PROCEDURES..... 172

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK..... 172

PROVINCIAL STATUTES AND REGULATIONS..... 175

ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES..... 181

SUMMARY..... 189

CHAPTER Page

7. IMPROVING ATTENDANCE IN SCHOOLS..... 191

SUGGESTIONS TO REDUCE ABSENTEEISM AND CLASS-SKIPPING... 191

ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES..... 201

Student Contracts..... 202

Home Visit Programs..... 204

Remediation..... 205

Tied Credit and Attendance..... 208

The Open Campus..... 214

Team Approach..... 215

Summary..... 216

8. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY..... 218

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY..... 218

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS..... 219

Levels and Patterns of Absenteeism..... 220

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools..... 220

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students..... 223

Dropouts and School Attendance..... 224

Characteristics of Good and Poor Attenders..... 225

School Board Attendance Policies..... 227

Improving School Attendance..... 228

IMPLICATIONS..... 230

Conclusion..... 232

REFERENCES..... 234

APPENDIX A INSTRUMENTS FOR DATA COLLECTION..... 1A

NOTE: APPENDIX B PATTERNS OF ABSENTEEISM IN SCHOOL is available on microfiche from the Ontario Government Bookstore, order ON01163 (price $2.00).

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1:1	Characteristics of the Sample Schools	19
2:1	Mean Daily Absenteeism in the Sample Schools	32
2:2	Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School E1	35
2:3	Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School E2	37
2:4	Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School E3	38
2:5	Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School E4	40
2:6	Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School E5	41
2:7	Patters of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School E6	43
2:8	Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School E7	44
2:9	Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School E8	46
2:10	Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School A1	48
2:11	Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School A2	49
2:12	Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School A3	51
2:13	Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School C1	52

Table		Page
2:14	Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School C2.....	54
2:15	Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School C3.....	55
2:16	Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School C4.....	57
2:17	Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School C5.....	59
2:18	Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School C6.....	60
2:19	Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School C7.....	62
2:20	Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School C8.....	63
2:21	Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School C9.....	65
2:22	Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded in School C10.....	66
2:23	Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School V1.....	68
2:24	Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded in School V2.....	69
2:25	Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences were Most Frequently Recorded for School V3.....	71
2:26	Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Order Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School E1.....	73

Table		Page
2:27	Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Order Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School E2.....	74
2:28	Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Order Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School E3.....	75
2:29	Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Order Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School E4.....	76
2:30	Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Order Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School E5.....	77
2:31	Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Order Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School E6.....	78
2:32	Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Order Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School E7.....	79
2:33	Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Order Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School E8.....	80
2:34	Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Order Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School A1.....	81
2:35	Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Order Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School A2.....	82
2:36	Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrency of Order Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School A3.....	83
2:37	Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Order Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School C1.....	84

Table | Page

2:38 Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Order Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School C2..... 85

2:39 Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Ordered Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School C3..... 86

2:40 Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Order Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School C4..... 87

2:41 Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Ordered Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School C5..... 88

2:42 Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Order Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School C6..... 89

2:43 Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Ordered Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School C7..... 90

2:44 Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Order Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School C8..... 91

2:45 Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Ordered Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School C9..... 92

2:46 Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Order Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School C10..... 93

2:47 Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Ordered Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School V1..... 94

2:48 Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Order Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School V2..... 95

Table		Page
2:49	Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Order Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School V3	96
3:1	Means and Standard Deviations of the Number of Absences During the 1976-77 School Year for Students Who Dropped Out During the 1977-78 School Year and Other Students	102
4:1	Percentage Distribution of Poor Attenders by Age	106
4:2	Percentage Distribution of Poor Attenders by Grade	107
4:3	Percentage Distribution of Good and Poor Attenders by Average Academic Grade in June 1977	108
4:4	Percentage Distribution of Good and Poor Attenders by Program	108
4:5	Percentage Distribution of Good and Poor Attenders by Parents in the Home	110
4:6	Percentage Distribution of Good and Poor Attenders by the Number of Children in the Home	111
4:7	Percentage Distribution of Good and Poor Attenders by Parents' Highest Level of Formal Education	111
4:8	Percentage Distribution of Good and Poor Attenders by Occupation of Parents or Guardians	113
4:9	Percentage Distribution of Good and Poor Attenders by Location of Residence	115
4:10	Percentage Distribution of Good and Poor Attenders by Most Common Means of Transportation to School	115
4:11	Distribution of Good and Poor Attenders by Future Plans	118
4:12	Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of School Satisfaction Index by Type and Sex of Student	122
4:13	Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of the Meaningfulness of School Work Index by Type and Sex of Student	123
4:14	Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of the Internal Work Motivation Index by Type and Sex of Student	123
4:15	Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of the Individual Growth Need Strength Index for Good and Poor Attenders by Sex	124

Table		Page
4:16	Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of School Work Satisfaction Indices for Students as Perceived by High School Teachers	125
4:17	Comparison of Percentage Responses of Teachers, Good and Poor Attenders for Questions on Attendance Procedures	127
4:18	Comparison of Percentage Responses of Teachers, Good and Poor Attenders for Questions on Absenteeism	129
4:19	Comparison of Percentage Responses of Teachers, Good and Poor Attenders for Questions on Class-skipping	131
4:20	Percentage Distribution of Teachers, Good and Poor Attenders by Number of Permissible Absences	133
4:21	Percentage Distribution of Teachers, Good and Poor Attenders by Frequency of Permissible Class-skipping	135
4:22	Percentage Responses of Teachers, Good and Poor Attenders with Respect to Reasons for Absences	136
4:23	Percentage Responses of Teachers, Good and Poor Attenders with Respect to Voluntary School Attendance	138
4:24	Percentage Responses of Teachers, Good and Poor Attenders with Respect to Rating of Levels of Absenteeism and Class-skipping	139
5:1	Percentage Distribution of Poor Attenders in Intermediate Grades by Age	142
5:2	Percentage Distribution of Intermediate Level of Good and Poor Attenders by Most Preferred Subject	143
5:3	Percentage Distribution of Intermediate Level Good and Poor Attenders by Academic Performance in June,1977	144
5:4	Percentage Distribution of Intermediate Level Good and Poor Attenders by Parents in the Home	145
5:5	Percentage Distribution of Intermediate Level Good and Poor Attenders by the Number of Children in the Home.	145
5:6	Percentage Distribution of Intermediate Level Good and Poor Attenders by Parents' Highest Level of Formal Education	146
5:7	Percentage Distribution of Intermediate Level Good and Poor Attenders by Occupation of Parents or Guardians.	147
5:8	Percentage Distribution of Intermediate Level Good and Poor Students by Location of Residence	149

Table | Page

5:9 Percentage Distribution of Intermediate Level Good and Poor Attenders by Most Common Means of Transportation to School..... 150

5:10 Distribution of Intermediate Level Good and Poor Attenders by Future Plans..... 152

5:11 Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of School Work Satisfaction Indices by Type and Sex of Intermediate Level Students..... 153

5:12 Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of School Work Indices for Students as Perceived by Intermediate Level Teachers..... 157

5:13 Comparison of Percentage Responses of Teachers, Good Attenders and Poor Attenders in Intermediate Levels for Questions on Attendance Procedures..... 159

5:14 Comparison of Percentage Responses of Teachers, Good Attenders and Poor Attenders in Intermediate Levels for Questions on Absenteeism..... 161

5:15 Comparison of Percentage Responses of Teachers, Good Attenders and Poor Attenders in Intermediate Levels for Questions on Class-Skipping..... 163

5:16 Percentage Distribution of Teachers, Good Attenders and Poor Attenders in the Intermediate Level by Number of Permissible Absences..... 164

5:17 Percentage Distribution of Teachers, Good and Poor Attenders in Intermediate Levels by Frequency of Permissible Class-Skipping..... 166

5:18 Percentage Responses of Teachers, Good and Poor Attenders in Intermediate Levels with Respect to Reasons for Absences..... 168

5:19 Percentage Responses of Teachers, Good and Poor Attenders in Intermediate Levels with Respect to Voluntary School Attendance..... 169

5:20 Percentage Responses of Teachers, Good and Poor Attenders in Intermediate Levels with Respect to Ratings of Levels of Absenteeism and Class-Skipping... 170

LIST OF FIGURES

Figures		Page
6:1	Relationship of Statutes and Policies.....	174
7:1	An Example of a Contract.....	203
7:2	Example of a Letter to Parents used by Boulder High School.....	209

1 The Problem of School Attendance

1 INTRODUCTION

While poor school attendance has always been a problem for educators it has become more significant in recent years because of the rise in the level of student absenteeism. Tyerman[1] indicates that in the United Kingdom the annual rate of absenteeism from school is about 10 per cent. In the United States some school boards have experienced situations where the number of students absent exceeded the number of those present.[2] The purpose of this study, undertaken by the Faculty of Education, Queen's University, for the Ministry of Education, is intended to provide current information on absenteeism in Ontario.

This study, in meeting the terms of reference provided by the Ministry of Education, examines the following issues related to school absenteeism:

1) the present levels and patterns of school attendance in elementary and secondary schools;
2) the relationship between patterns of school attendance and selected variables such as: school organization, attitudes towards school, and seasonal or weekly factors;
3) the general characteristics of persistent poor school attenders;
4) the relationship between poor school attendance and dropping out of school;
5) the range and nature of board policies and procedures with respect to attendance;

6) the procedures presently employed to monitor patterns of school attendance.

In essence, the project is viewed as a baseline study which provides descriptive data regarding the nature of school absenteeism and the school absentee in the Province of Ontario. Thus, caution is advised in making any generalizations about patterns of absenteeism in particular schools or trying to prepare a description of the typical school absentee. Absenteeism cannot be attributed to a single factor or set of factors but is the result of a complete interplay of personal, social, and institutional factors which are different for each individual. Thus, the study is in no way exhaustive but is an attempt to provide an overview of the problem in the context of Ontario schools.

Some of the issues which are of concern to this study have also been the subject of earlier research in the United States and the United Kingdom. Although the previous studies may not be as extensive as this one, a review of the relevant literature does provide an appropriate background for this study.

II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature on school attendance has grown considerably in recent years. This phenomenon has been due primarily to the importance accorded to the problems in the present decade. The matter has been of particular concern in the United States and the United Kingdom where most of the research on school absenteeism has been undertaken. In the literature, two research approaches are evident: (1) the single case study in which data is gathered from one school only, and (2) comparative studies in which data from several schools, usually

within a particular school board jurisdiction are examined. The former approach is by far the most common of the two. The different approaches to the study of school attendance may account, in part, for some of the variations in the reported findings.

Problems of Definition

One factor which makes comparisons of studies of this nature particularly difficult is the variety of definitions of the term 'absence'. This problem is compounded by the desire to separate justifiable absences from the various forms of truancy. For example, absenteeism is sometimes taken to mean any absence for a whole day whether excusable or not as per school register.[3] One apparent defect of this particular definition is that it underestimates concealed truancy due to class-skipping after the registers have been closed. Absenteeism has also been taken to mean all forms of absenteeism except for chronic illness.[4] This usage may also underestimate actual absence since some parents may be inclined to give illness as an excuse to keep a student at home for unjustifiable reasons or to 'cover' for their children out of loyalty when there is no illness whatsoever. There is also possible distortion of attendance where older students are permitted to write their own excuses. In these cases the temptation to give illness as the excuse when there is no actual sickness also affects the accuracy of data on inexcusable absences since schools generally regard health reasons as legitimate. Absenteeism may also be over-estimated especially in the case of the 'phantom student', for example, the student who has left school but is recorded as absent due to variations between schools in the promptness of removing him from the register.[5]

The degree of absenteeism may be exaggerated because of innaccurate recording of attendance. For example, students may be wrongly marked as absent when they are present in the school, or vice versa. As a consequence the differences in definition and measurement of absenteeism are partially responsible for the different estimates of the extent of absenteeism and thereby contribute to some of the variations in the findings.

Despite the existence of differences in the definitions and measurements of absenteeism, at least some consensus of opinion does exist with respect to the view that school attendance at the elementary or primary level is not a problem. This is particularly true of elementary school children below the age of 11 who dislike going to school. Their attendance record is very little different from that of those who like school. It would therefore appear that, during primary school years, parental and teacher influence is a greater factor in the achievement of regular attendance than a student's own inclination or those of his peers.[6] In later years the weakening of parental and teacher influence and the growth of other influences on the child seem to account for the increased association between dislike of school and poor attendance. A complementary finding indicates that persistent absentee rates show no real change between the ages of 5 and 12 though it rises steeply afterwards.[7] The attitude of the home is also perceived as an important variable by Galloway, who established that absence without parents' knowledge or consent is far less common than parents being unable or unwilling to insist on student attendance.

In the sections which follow, the literature on attendance is reviewed under the summary headings of (i) costs of absenteeism,

(ii) reasons for poor attendance, (iii) patterns of non-attendance, (iv) factors in attendance, and (v) a summary profile of the poor attender.

(i) Costs of School Absenteeism

Student absenteeism entails several costs which, though not obvious to the truanting student, are often evident to the teacher, school officials, and administrators. Among these costs is the real loss of student achievement by the truant, since absences prevent the student from taking full advantage of the available formal educational opportunities.[8] This loss in the cognitive domain, serious as it is, may be less important than the loss in the affective domain. The evidence suggests that poor attendance is related not only to poor academic performance but also to difficulties in forming friendly links with other children.[9] In fact, Stinger[10] suggests that truancy and school failures are factors in maladjustment in later adulthood.

Truancy not only adversely affects the individual truant but also other class members who are not themselves truants. Through the disruptions in the class, these students are subjected to re-teaching of curriculum[11] and interruptions in schedules[12] because of the efforts of the teacher to assist the returning truant. From this perspective, absenteeism is much more than the personal business of the truant since it impinges on both the learning of other students and the instruction time of teachers. Chronic disruptions also raise a moral dilemma for the teacher which has yet to be squarely faced in the literature: "Should teaching be geared to the pace set by truants or to that of the better attenders?" In either case one or the other loses.

Persistent student absenteeism also results in economic and

other costs to the school itself. There is the loss due to idle equipment and other unused investment; school costs can become inflated because staffing quotas seldom take into account absenteeism; teachers and clerical staff may have to be moved because of changing attendance patterns. Additional expenses are incurred in terms of time spent by principals, counsellors, and attendance workers in maintaining records.[13] A potential outcome under conditions of chronic absenteeism is that the administration of students becomes more important than teaching. In countries such as the United States there is another more direct cost. It is the loss of grants to schools and school boards in states where monies for the operation of the school are disbursed on the basis of daily attendance.[14]

Truancy can lead to long-term societal costs. For example, poor school attendance may have a spill-over effect into the world of work. It has been suggested that habits of absenteeism in schools may be transferred to the work-place. This aspect of truancy is still to be systematically researched. The correlation, however, appears to be strong. A recent report on the Toronto schools indicates that many teenagers who have been truant from school and who have obtained work subsequently fail to show up for work regularly.[15]

From an early stage in the development of the literature, the relationship between truancy and deliquency has been the subject of enquiry by both educators and criminologists. Their starting point has been a variation on the theme that "the devil finds work for idle hands." In the first half of the 1940's one prominent British criminologist argued without hesitation that truancy is "usually the first step on the downward stair to crime--the first premonitory portent of far more desperate misdemeanors."[16] Similarly, in the mid-sixties,

it was postulated that "truancy may lead to delinquency as the truanting child with idle time on his hands has to roam the streets in search of food and entertainment and is therefore likely to get into mischief."[17] However, the reported findings have varied. Tennent[18] suggested a significant correlation between school non-attendance and later delinquency on the basis of his review of the literature primarily dealing with American juvenile delinquents and adult offenders. A subsequent study of Aberdeen schoolboys[19] suggests that, while there is a correlation between truancy and delinquency, the correlation is a weak one and that truancy may better be viewed as an intervening variable. The more important independent variable is deemed 'social disadvantage' since the majority of delinquents have perfectly good attendance. A conclusion is that truancy "is neither a sufficient nor a necessary cause of delinquency and in fact is peripheral to the larger social problem."[20]

(ii) Reasons for Poor School Attendance

In the literature a number of reasons, each of varying importance and with some degree of overlap, have been advanced for school absenteeism. The most obvious of these is absence due to physical illness. One study in the United States reports that the 'normal' absentee rate for health reasons is 7 to 9 school days in a school year, and that 'normal illness' accounts for an average absenteeism rate of 4 to 5 per cent. It also estimated that absences in excess of the 'normal' illness due to chronic or long-term illness affect 0.5 per cent of the school enrolment.[21] Other data for the United Kingdom suggest that illness is responsible for an absentee rate of 8 per cent in that country.

A second reason given for absenteeism is parent withdrawal.

In these situations lack of attendance may be due to economic necessity--girls may be kept home to assist mothers with housework; boys to assist in farm chores (especially in rural areas) or the family business. At the other end of the socio-economic scale, the student may be taken out of school to accompany the family on vacations during the school year. Withdrawal may also reflect the anti-authority and anti-school sentiments of some parents, particularly those from lower socio-economic levels. A British study of primary and secondary school students in Sheffield estimated that 15 to 19 per cent of absenteeism (excepting chronic illness) in these respective schools was with the parents' knowledge, consent, or approval.[22] A second British study, carried out by the North West Regional Society of Education Officers[23] estimated that in their geographic area 15 per cent of overall absenteeism could be accounted for by parents keeping their children from school for no 'good reason.' A similar study of seven secondary schools in Central Scotland concluded that nearly a fifth of all absentees were away from school to help at home or for other unsatisfactory reasons.[24]

More important than parent withdrawal of the student is the inability or the unwillingness of the parent to insist upon a child's return to school. In such cases the child remains at home with the parents' knowledge but not with their active consent. The Sheffield study estimated that this factor alone accounted for 31 per cent of high school absenteeism and 19 per cent of primary school absenteeism.[25]

A fourth reason commonly offered for school absenteeism is truancy, which is viewed as absence without the parents' knowledge or consent. In 1974 a nation-wide survey by the United Kingdom Department of Education and Science on one day in January revealed

that 10 per cent of all pupils aged 12 or over were absent from school. Of this number, 20 per cent were thought to be absent without legitimate reasons (i.e. truants).[26] The North West Regional Society of Education Officers estimated a lower rate of overall absenteeism, namely 7.1 per cent, in their area in May 1971, with truancy accounting for a 5 per cent level of absenteeism.[27] These differing estimates are probably due to factors such as seasonal variations, differences in the student population studies, and the definition of truancy.

Truancy itself may be precipitated by a variety of factors. Among these contributors to truancy, dissatisfaction with the school appears to be of considerable importance. Sproule[28] points out that the school may not appear to be offering to the student "the things that are relevant to the life he is going to lead." Other causes of absenteeism which have been considered are: the natural stresses of adolescence, parental and home difficulties, the relationship between teacher and student, and the location of the school. The latter factor may be more relevant in large urban centers where abundant "opportunities of just anonymously disappearing from school and wandering about the streets"[29] are provided.

A fifth reason commonly offered for poor school attendance is "school phobia." The term denotes the absentee who is neither chronically ill nor truant, but who upon reaching school develops a gastro-intestinal upset for which no physical cause can be found. The problem is often a manifestation of severe anxiety rather than a simple desire to avoid school.[30] Although school phobia is a factor for particular individuals, the impact of this phenomenon as a whole on the absentee rate <u>in toto</u> is regarded as limited and marginal. However

the effect appears to be greater for primary school pupils than for secondary school students. Indeed, the research suggests that school phobia is a more important factor in absenteeism at the primary school level than truancy. Galloway[31] estimates that, while the former accounts for a persistent unjustified absenteeism rate of 4 per cent, truancy is responsible for 2 per cent absentee rate. Secondary school level phobia is thought to account for an absentee rate of 4 per cent, which is much less than the 15 per cent absentee rate due to truancy in the City of Sheffield schools.

On the whole, the literature suggests that the attitude of the parent is one of the single most important factors affecting persistent unjustified absenteeism from school, and ranks ahead of truancy, school phobia, and related psychosomatic factors.

(iii) Patterns of Non-attendance

A review of the research on patterns of non-attendance reveals considerable variation in the findings regarding the level of absenteeism within and across schools. Research undertaken in the United Kingdom reveals that throughout that country the overall annual percentage of attendance is about ninety one. As well, there is no sign of a general decline in attendance though, of course, trends of this nature may be occurring in particular schools or regions.[32] A survey also reveals a slight disparity in attendance between primary and secondary schools. In the former, attendance was about 0.5 per cent higher than the overall average and about the same percentage lower for the latter. While similar surveys are not available for U.S. schools on a nation-wide basis, it has been estimated that the incidence of absenteeism in most large city schools is 10 per cent.[33] Higher rates are recorded for inner-core areas; indeed, an absentee

rate of 50 per cent has been reported for many inner-city schools by several individual researchers.[34]

Research findings indicate variations in the rate of absenteeism according to the time of year. In one large, all-girl school in Maryland, the incidence of absenteeism was found to be higher on Mondays and Fridays and on rainy days and other bad weather days.[35] A similar finding has also been reported for a large co-ed academic high school in Connecticut, where it was found that absenteeism was higher on days other than Wednesday and Thursday, and lowest on days of important tests and exams.[36] Levanto has also reported monthly variations in absenteeism which were highest for September, particularly the first two and a half weeks of school, and for May. In contrast Karwelt[37] reports absenteeism as highest at the end of the school year. However, this finding is based upon a more limited survey of the last 72 days of the school year. A British survey also reported a seasonal variation in absenteeism. In this study attendance in the Autumn term was observed to be a little higher than in the Summer term, both of which were higher than in the Spring term.[38]

(iv) Factors in Attendance

In the literature a number of factors that are considered to be associated with attendance have been identified. These include size of school, geographic location and distance from school, age and grade level, sex of student, achievement, I.Q., school program, attitude of parents and teachers, race, religion, and student personality. The findings, however, are not always consistent and it appears that the importance of particular factors are amplified or moderated by differences in the climate of the school or set of schools.

In one major British study, size of school was found to have little bearing on the incidence of absenteeism. The schools studied varied in size from less than 600 to more than 1800 students. Indeed, it was found that some of the larger schools had a slightly lower rate of absenteeism. However, it was subsequently shown that this was probably due to a tendency for the larger schools to be in slightly more favorable areas.[39] Another survey of 165 secondary schools conducted by the British Headmasters Association concluded that when all factors have been considered, the fact remains that the larger a school the greater the proportion of students with low attendance records.[40]

A U.S. study of Virginia high schools found that as size increased the attendance rate decreased. Although the correlation of -.2427 was small, the author contends that the finding was significant, and that it is important for school planners to know that attendance is negatively related to size of school, because the direction of the correlation runs counter to the expectation.[41]

In the Virginia study, schools were also categorized as urban, suburban, and other, on the basis of the U.S. Census Bureau's population density classification system. The author found a negative relationship between attendance rate and population density, namely, that schools in the less urbanized areas had higher attendance rates (or lower absenteeism) than schools in the more urbanized areas. The author suggests that this phenomenon appears to be also related to the type of student and society characteristic within these areas.

The factor of distance from school was found to have no effect on school attendance in a recent study where this variable

was considered.[42] This finding was consistent with an earlier study[43] which also reported that distance from school was not a significant factor in attendance.

The correlation between absenteeism and age of student does show considerable consistency, not only among schools but also among countries. In a U.K. survey of attendance on one day in January, 1974, it was revealed that the highest percentage of absences was among adolescents aged 15. In a more local study of Sheffield school children who were persistently absent in the autumn term, it was found that the rate of absenteeism showed no real change between the age of 5 and 12, but rose steeply thereafter and reached the highest level in the case of year five students in secondary schools.[44] A similar type of case study of a large secondary school undertaken in the United States reported a higher incidence of absenteeism with succeeding class and age group.[45]

A number of studies have included an examination of rate of absenteeism with sex of students. However the findings, particularly at the secondary school level, have not always been consistent and are perhaps affected by regional factors within a country as well as cross-cultural factors. For example, in the Sheffield study it was found that in middle schools (ages 8 to 12) the level of absenteeism is slightly higher for boys. The converse was observed in every other age group, although the difference is too small to draw any firm conclusions.[46] In contrast, the U.S. findings were more conclusive. Levanto[47] reports that boys in the first three years of high school have lower rates of absenteeism than girls. At the senior levels boys have a higher rate of absenteeism than girls in the same class.

Attempts to relate absenteeism with school achievement or

school attainment have not been conclusive. Absenteeism was found to be lowest for senior students with the highest class ranks in academic achievement.[48] Similarly, Karweit[49] reports that the longer the absenteeism of the student, the lower is the student's marks. She also raises the suspicion that teachers may deliberately or unconsciously downgrade the habitual absentee. In such situations the correlation may become larger than is actually the case.

A further difficulty, in addition to the problem of assigning grades to the habitual absentee, is the implicit assumption employed in some studies that poor attendance necessarily results in poor achievement. This may very well be the case for many students, but the possibility also exists that poor achievement may lead to poor attendance. This aspect of absenteeism has yet to be adequately researched.

At the primary school level, the correlations between absenteeism and achievement reported by investigators have been the source of some interesting controversy. In his 1928 study Ziegler[50] found a positive correlation between attendance and school marks for seventh graders. A later post-war study[51] disagreed with Ziegler's findings regarding school attendance and school marks. More recently a British study indicates that neither of the previous studies were completely wrong but suggests a possible resolution of the contradiction. Using reading comprehension scores as a surrogate measure of achievement, and regular attendance data, The National Child Development Study[52] revealed that there appears to be little relationship between test scores and attendance rates for children from the upper end of the socio-economic scale. In contrast, a significant relationship between low attendance and low reading scores was found for children from

lower socio-economic status families. A very similar picture emerged with the use of arithmetic and general ability test scores. It would therefore appear that school attendance has a more limited impact on achievement than social class. Levanto[53] reports that students with low I.Q. measures tend to have higher rates of absenteeism than those with high I.Q. measures.

The relationship reported between school program and school absenteeism evinces considerable consistency among schools in the U.S. and the U.K. Secondary school students in the United States who were college bound have been found to have the lowest rates of absenteeism, followed by business students and general program students.[54] Similarly in Britain grammar schools tend to have better attendance figures than comprehensive schools and secondary modern schools. However, attendance is observed to decrease as pupils become older, especially those students in lower streams.[55]

Home background and parental attitudes are also important factors which influence school attendance. Students from single parent homes tend to have higher rates of absenteeism than those from two parent homes.[56] Even more important than the number of parents in the home is the influence that parents are able to exert over their children. In the Sheffield study alluded to earlier, the proportion of total absenteeism (excluding prolonged illness) accounted for by truancy was far less than the level of absenteeism which was a consequence of the inability of parents or their unwillingness to insist on the child's return to school. Furthermore, the level of absenteeism with parents' knowledge, consent, or approval, was almost equivalent to the proportion of absenteeism in high school accounted for by truancy. The situation was found to be more marked at the

primary school level. While truancy accounted for only 2 per cent of total absences, the withdrawal of children by parents was responsible for 19 per cent of primary school absences and the inability or unwillingness of parents to pressure their children into going to school increased the level of absenteeism by a further 18.6 per cent.

The findings reported on the effect of the relationship between teacher and student on attendance, indicate that attendance tends to be higher in situations where the pupil-teacher ratio is also high.[57] Moreover, if the teacher's level of interest in students is perceived to be high by the students themselves, then attendance has also been found to be high.[58] A similar finding was reported in 1928 by Ziegler[59] as in the case of home-room teachers who exhibited interest and concern about their students.

Other correlates of attendance reported in the literature are race, religion, and student personality. Absentee rates have been found to be higher for Blacks than Whites in U.S. schools whereas in the same schools the attendance of Jewish children has been found to be quite high, followed by that for Catholic children, other religions, Protestants, and those who reported no religion. Higher rates of absenteeism have also been reported for students with poorer personality ratings. One suspects that in these cases attendance may have the characteristic of a self-fulfilling prophecy.

In reviewing the research on absenteeism two major shortcomings become apparent in the findings reported. First, the studies seldom rank the factors contributing to absenteeism in order of importance which may be a consequence of the type of statistical analysis undertaken. Second, checks for spuriousness of correlations are generally lacking. However, despite these defects, it may be

surmised that parental attitudes, socio-economic background, and the age of the student account for most of the variance in absenteeism.

(v) Profile of the Poor Attender

On the basis of the literature available, the following profile of a poor attender is suggested:

(a) he or she tends to be a high school rather than a primary school student;

(b) the poor attender tends to live in an urban rather than a rural setting;

(c) the student tends to follow a non-academic rather than an academic program;

(d) he or she is more likely to come from a single-parent family rather than a two-parent family;

(e) the student's academic performance is usually below average; and

(f) the poor attender comes from a low socio-economic background.

III RESEARCH DESIGN

The purpose of this study is to provide baseline data on the patterns of attendance, the characteristics of poor school attenders, and the factors affecting absenteeism. To fulfill this mandate it was necessary to develop a research design which would permit the gathering of data from several sources. This part of the report provides details of the samples selected, the type of data collected, and the methods of analysis employed.

Sample Selection

The extent of the data required to examine patterns of attendance precluded a survey of all schools in the province. As an

alternative, twenty-four elementary and secondary schools were selected which represented the most common types of schools. The criteria used to select these representative schools were: demographic location; school size; school system size; type of school; type of program. A summary of the characteristics of the eight elementary and sixteen secondary schools selected is provided in Table 1:1. Some explanation of the criteria employed is necessary.

With the exception of secondary school types, all of the characteristics employed are dichotomized. Thus, the demographic basis for the selection of schools is simply urban and non-urban. For purposes of this study, an urban district is defined as a built-up area with a population greater than or equal to 50,000. Non-urban areas are considered to be primarily rural in nature with a population of less than 50,000. Schools within each of these types of locations were selected from both the Northern and Southern regions of the province. The basis for the North-South division of the province employed is the regions established by the Ministry of Education. Consequently, Northern schools were selected from those located within the Northwestern, Midnorthern, and Northeastern regions, whereas Southern schools were chosen from schools in the Western, Central, or Eastern regions of the province. It is recognized that the schools designated for the Southern region had to be selected from areas as diverse as Metropolitan Toronto, South-Western Ontario, the Niagara Region, Eastern Ontario, and the Ottawa Valley.

In addition to location of schools, consideration had to be given to certain characteristics of schools themselves. For example, school size was considered as an important factor to consider in examining patterns of attendance. For this study, a large elementary

TABLE 1:1

Characteristics of the Sample Schools.

School Characteristics				Board Characteristics		
Code & Type	Grades	Size	Location	Size	Type	Location
Elementary						
E1	K-8	Small	Other	Small	Separate	South
E2	K-8	Large	Other	Large	Public	South
E3	7-8	Small	Urban	Large	Separate	South
E4	7-8	Small	Urban	Small	Public	North
E5	K-8	Small	Other	Large	Public	North
E6	K-8	Small	Urban	Small	Public	South
E7	7-8	Large	Urban	Large	Public	South
E8	K-8	Small	Urban	Small	Separate	North
Secondary						
Academic						
A1	9-13	Large	Urban	Large	Public	South
A2	9-13	Small	Urban	Large	Public	South
A3	9-13	Small	Urban	Small	Public	South
Comprehensive						
C1	9-13	Large	Other	Large	Public	South
C2	9-13	Large	Other	Small	Public	South
C3	9-13	Large	Urban	Small	Public	South
C4	9-13	Large	Urban	Large	Public	South
C5	9-13	Large	Urban	Large	Public	South
C6	9-13	Small	Other	Small	Separate	South
C7	9-13	Small	Urban	Large	Public	North
C8	9-13	Small	Other	Large	Public	North
C9	9-13	Large	Urban	Large	Public	North
C10	9-13	Small	Other	Small	Public	South
Vocational						
V1	9-12	Large	Urban	Large	Public	South
V2	7-10	Small	Urban	Large	Public	South
V3	9-12	Small	Urban	Small	Public	North

school is defined as a school having 25 or more teachers, whereas a small elementary school is one with less than 25 teachers. Secondary schools tend to have higher enrolments than elementary schools and it was for this reason that the pivotal point between large and small schools was set at 50 teachers. A further factor of size which was taken into consideration when selecting schools was the factor of school board size. In keeping with the polar alternatives, a small school board was defined as one in which less than 750 teachers were employed. Conversely, a large school board was one which employed 750 or more teachers.

Two school systems exist in this province which are recognized for legislative grant purposes, namely the public school boards and the Roman Catholic separate school boards. While public school boards administer both elementary and secondary schools, the separate boards are essentially concerned with elementary education. With this in mind, the sample of elementary schools includes schools from both educational systems, whereas secondary schools were selected from the public school system only.

It was recognized that within the broad division of elementary and secondary schools a variety of school organizations exist. In the case of elementary schools, the type of schools selected included grades 7 and 8. Thus, the elementary schools considered were either K-8 or Grade 7-8 schools. The K-6 schools were excluded because attendance was not perceived as a problem in the lower grades and so their inclusion would add little to the study. The selection of secondary schools was based upon the dominant program offering. Thus, three types of schools were examined: (1) academic; (2) comprehensive; and (3) vocational.

Using the above criteria, eight elementary schools were selected as case studies. These schools were located in communities with populations ranging from less than 1000 to more than 2,000,000. The sizes of school vary from schools with 6 teachers and slightly over a hundred students to schools with nearly 30 teachers and over 650 students. The boards from which the primary schools were chosen range from a small one of barely over 200 teachers and far less than 4500 pupils, to a very large system with over 4000 teachers and over 90,000 pupils. In the primary school sample, one school was chosen from Northern Ontario, two from North-Western Ontario, two from the Metro area, one from the South-West, and two from Eastern Ontario. Over half the schools (five of eight) were selected from the public school system. The K-8 schools were weighted heavier because they represent the mode for the primary level.

Like the primary schools, the high school case studies were selected from a range of small communities to the largest urban area. The division of the schools according to demographic location was weighted in favour of the urban schools to reflect the distribution of the population of the province. The schools themselves ranged from very small schools which consisted of less than 15 teachers and slightly more than 200 students, to very large schools of nearly 100 teachers and 1700 students. The boards from which the schools were chosen also varied from small to very large. Although the sample was heavily weighted in favour of the more numerous comprehensive schools, it also included some of the less common academic and vocational schools. In the case of one of the vocational schools selected the beginning year was Grade 7.

For purposes of administering a questionnaire on school

attendance, it was necessary to select groups of both good and bad attenders within the chosen schools. A poor attender was defined as a student who had the equivalent of 20 or more absences between September 1st and April 30th of the current academic year. An attempt was made to exclude students from the sample of poor attenders where reasons for absenteeism were considered legitimate. Thus, in consultation with the attendance clerk, students who were absent because of chronic illness or hospitalization were excluded from the lists of poor attenders. The sample of poor attenders was further limited by excluding students who had dropped out of school during the current academic year.

In view of the small number of poor attenders and the anticipated difficulty in administering a questionnaire to all poor attenders, it was decided to use the population of such students rather than a sample. The situation was somewhat different for good attenders. In each school a sample of these students was selected which was representative of the grades under consideration. The size of the sample of good attenders was limited to the population of poor attenders.

Teachers were also asked to complete a questionnaire on school attendance. Since the total number of teachers in the selected schools was relatively small, the whole population was asked to respond to the instrument rather than a sample of the group.

Research Instruments

Four instruments were employed to gather the necessary data. These were: (1) student absentee form; (2) a questionnaire on school attendance; (3) a request for policies dealing with absenteeism; and (4) an interview schedule on school procedures and environment.

The student absentee form was used to collect attendance information about every student in each school. The information recorded for each student on this form included school code, sex, and grade level of the student and the dates for each daily absence. In the case of students who dropped out of school, provision was made to record this fact. While anonymity of each student was maintained, it was possible to review patterns of absenteeism by sex, grade level, and school. The data for this purpose was taken from the school registers. Details regarding the recording and analysis of this data are provided in Appendix A.

The student questionnaire, consisting of 68 items, was developed in conjunction with an Advisory Committee of school attendance officers and school administrators. It was used to obtain information such as socio-economic status of the student, level of school achievement, perceptions of the school, attitudes towards school work and school attendance, and future academic and vocational plans. Items to determine levels of school satisfaction, internal work motivation, and need for personal growth were also included. In addition, open-ended questions were posed to solicit the opinions of students regarding class-skipping and attendance. The data gathered by this instrument was used as a basis for comparison between good and poor attenders.

A similar questionnaire consisting of 49 items was prepared for the teachers employed in the schools included in the study. The purpose of this questionnaire was to gather the perceptions of teachers on student absenteeism, class-skipping, and truancy, and to compare, among other things, their views of the school, school satisfaction, and needs for personal growth, with the students' perceptions

of these matters. Samples of the questionnaires used are provided in Appendix A.

Two interview schedules were developed in order to obtain information regarding the location and organization of the school, the procedures employed to record attendance, and the established routines used to deal with absentees. The purpose of these schedules was to provide other supplementary data which would assist the investigators in explaining patterns of attendance which the analysis might not reveal. The interview schedules are presented in Appendix A.

Data Collection Procedures

All of the data, with the exception of details regarding school board policy on school attendance, was collected by four research teams. Each team, which consisted of two research assistants, was assigned to collect data from the selected schools in the geographic area to which it was assigned. Data collection was begun in the last week of April and completed by the end of May. Every attempt was made to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of the schools and students participating in the study.

Before a research team visited a school, permission to include the school in the study had been granted by the school board and the principal of the school. In addition, school principals were contacted to arrange time periods for data collection in their schools which were convenient to both parties. Despite the burden of this and other research projects which is placed upon schools, the research assistants were pleased with the cooperation and assistance provided in each of the schools visited.

On first entering a school to collect data, the research team

met with the principal, or with staff members designated by the principal, to outline the nature of the study and the data to be collected. Once facilities were made available, the research team would begin the tasks of gathering data, and arranging suitable times to administer the questionnaires and for interviews.

Data on student absenteeism was obtained from all of the schools' registers for the academic year 1976-77. An exception was made for one school which had changed its method of recording school attendance in that year. For this school, data was collected for the academic year 1977-78. In this activity, the date of every absence for each student was recorded, together with the sex and grade level of the student.

Once poor and good attenders had been identified, using the current school registers, consent request forms were distributed to the particular student by the home room teachers. Two days were allowed for the return of the consent forms. The rate of return of these forms was the highest in elementary schools. In most cases the returns exceeded 80 per cent which compared most favourably with the returns in high schools which ranged from 25 to 64 per cent. Despite the poor response from high school students, at least 20 per cent of the population of poor school attenders participated in the study. An obvious problem in a study of this nature is the administration of the questionnaire to students who are considered to be poor attenders. To partially offset this difficulty, questionnaires were administered twice whenever possible.

The teacher questionnaire was distributed to each teacher, who was requested to complete the instrument and return it to one of the research assistants. The rate of response varied between 50 and

90 per cent. In addition, one of the research assistants interviewed the principal and other staff members of the school, in order to obtain descriptive information regarding the school and its location.

In addition to the data gathered by the research teams, a request was mailed to the attendance officer of each of the school boards included in the study. This request asked for copies or details of policy documents and regulations developed by the boards to deal with matters of school absenteeism. The initial responses to this request did not provide much data and, as a consequence, a similar letter was sent to other school boards. A copy of the letter is provided in Appendix A.

Analysis of the Data

As was stated previously, the purpose of the study is to provide a description of poor attenders and the patterns of attendance which exist in some Ontario schools. While an attempt has been made to select representative schools of varying types, it was not our intention to use the findings for predictive purposes but merely to observe whether the picture of absenteeism does differ among the various types of schools selected. In light of these conditions, the analysis of the data was deliberately limited.

The data were converted to a machine-readable form then edited to ensure accuracy. The level of absenteeism, the patterns of absenteeism of groups within the school, and patterns of absenteeism among students were identified independently for each school.

Level of Absenteeism. The mean of the number of absences (of at least one-half of a day) per day of the school year were calculated. The mean number of absences per day was expressed as a percentage of the December enrolment to provide a measure of the level

of absenteeism in the school. The ratio, the mean number of absences per day of the school year for boys to that for girls, was calculated.

School Patterns. Patterns of attendance within each school were investigated for the following groups: boys, girls and all students within the school; and for all students in each grade. For each group the analysis proceeded through the following steps:

1. Identification of the weeks of the year with at least four days on which absences were recorded;
2. Identification for each week so identified, of the day on which most absences were recorded, and that on which the second highest number of absences were recorded;
3. Calculation of the frequency of occurrence of the ordered pairs, identified in (2.) above, for for the parts of the school year before and after Christmas, and for the whole of the school year.

The information resulting from this analysis enabled the identification of patterns of absenteeism in groups of students within the school and the investigation of differences between the patterns occurring before and after Christmas.

Student Patterns. Patterns of absenteeism among individual students were investigated for students with more than 10 absences during the school year. The analysis was carried out independently for each school and proceeded through the following steps:

1. Identification of those students with more than ten absences in the school year;
2. Identification for each student so identified, of the day of the week on which he was most often absent, and that on which he was next most often absent;

3. Calculation of the frequency of the ordered pairs identified in (2.) above for four groups of students, viz., those with, respectively, eleven to twenty, twenty-one to forty, more than forty, and more than eleven absences during the school year.

The information resulting from this analysis enabled the identification of weekly patterns of absenteeism among students in a school and the investigation of differences among groups of students with different levels of absenteeism.

Further analysis of patterns of absenteeism took the form of the calculation of the mean and standard deviation of the frequency distribution of the number of absences per student for two groups within each secondary school, viz., students who 'dropped out' in the 1977-78 school year and those who did not. The information from this analysis was used in the investigation of the relationship between poor school attendance and dropping out of school.

School Policies. The analysis of school policies consisted of a review of the content of the policies provided. The basis for this review was a series of questions concerning absenteeism which are presented in Chapter 6.

The Questionnaire Survey. Both teachers and students were asked to complete questionnaires which were designed to elicit information regarding matters such as family background, future plans, perceptions of absenteeism and class-skipping. The data from these questions were converted to a computer-readable format and checked for accuracy. Two ways of compiling the data were employed. In most cases, the responses were expressed in a percentage distribution format. The data collected to assess school satisfaction were used to calculate the mean and standard deviation for each of the indices

used.

In the remaining portion of the report the findings are presented in Chapters 2 to 7 inclusive. Chapter 8 provides a short summary of the study together with some conclusions. Appendix A includes copies of the questionnaires used as well as other forms employed. The tables included in Appendix B provide more detail about patterns of attendance.

2 Levels and Patterns of Absenteeism—Findings

This chapter reports the component of the study addressing problems concerning levels and patterns of absenteeism. These problems are investigated through the analysis of data obtained from the attendance registers in each of the sample schools.

I PROBLEMS

The research problems addressed in this portion of the study may be expressed as follows:

1. What are the present levels of absenteeism in elementary and secondary schools in Ontario?
2. What are the present patterns of absenteeism in elementary and secondary schools in Ontario?
3. What are the present patterns of absenteeism among students in elementary and secondary schools in Ontario?

II FINDINGS

The findings of this portion of the study are presented in relation to the three problem areas being investigated, for example, levels of absenteeism, patterns of absenteeism in schools, and patterns of absenteeism among students.

Levels of Absenteeism

The measure of absenteeism used in this study for each school is the mean of the number of students absent per day of the school year. To facilitate comparisions this measure is expressed as a percentage of the enrolment for December in the academic year under observation. This information is displayed, for all sample

schools, in Table 2:1.

The range and mean of the levels of absenteeism were, respectively: for all schools, 3.5-20.1 and 7.8; for elementary schools, 3.5-8.8 and 5.5; for all secondary schools, 3.5-20.1 and 8.9; for academic secondary schools, 5.2-8.4 and 6.0; for comprehensive secondary schools, 3.5-13.1 and 8.4; for vocational schools, 9.4-20.1 and 13.5.

As can be seen from Table 2:1, the level of absenteeism was higher for boys in thirteen of the sample schools; four of the elementary schools; nine of the secondary schools--one academic secondary school; five comprehensive secondary schools; and all three vocational secondary schools.

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools

Patterns of absenteeism were investigated independently for each school. Within each school, findings were investigated for the following groups; students in the school, boys in the school, girls in the school, and all students in each grade. Patterns were investigated within three time periods: (1) the school year, (2) the school year prior to the Christmas vacation, and (3) the period after the Christmas vacation. Provided that there were, respectively at least twenty, eight and twelve weeks during which absences were recorded on at least four days. The number of weeks selected for each time period represent approximately half of the calendar weeks within that period.

The information used to identify patterns of absenteeism for the various groups and time periods in each school was obtained from the raw data by:

1. identifying the weeks in that time period during which absences occurred on at least four days;

TABLE 2:1

Mean Daily Absenteeism in the Sample Schools

School Code	Enrolment	Mean Daily Absenteeism		
		Number of Students	%age of Enrolment	Boys vs Girls[a]
E1	177	10.0	5.6	.7
E2	539	20.1	3.7	1.1
E3	218	7.6	3.5	.5
E4	479	25.3	5.3	1.1
E5	107	6.0	5.6	.8
E6	420	20.3	4.8	1.1
E7	517	33.0	6.4	1.0
E8	290	25.5	8.8	.9
A1	835	43.8	5.2	.9
A2	906	40.4	4.5	.6
A3	900	75.4	8.4	1.1
C1	1025	114.8	11.2	1.1
C2	1643	113.4	6.9	.9
C3	1102	144.5	13.1	1.2
C4	811	49.3	6.1	1.0
C5	1146	107.1	9.3	1.2
C6	806	66.0	8.2	1.2
C7	759	52.7	6.9	1.0
C8	203	7.1	3.5	.6
C9	1087	118.0	10.9	.7
C10	563	41.5	7.4	1.1
V1	444	89.3	20.1	1.1
V2	316	29.6	9.4	1.3
V3	400	44.5	11.1	1.4

[a]Ratio of the mean daily absenteeism for boys to the mean daily absenteeism for girls.

2. identifying the two days, of each of the above weeks, on which the highest and second highest number of absences were recorded;

3. calculating, for each day of the week, the number of weeks during which the highest number of absences was recorded on that day. This number was then expressed as a percentage of the number of weeks in the time-period during which absences were recorded on at least four days;

4. calculating the number of occurrences of each pair of days, ordered from highest to lowest number of absences, on which the highest and second highest number of absences were recorded. This number of occurrences was then expressed as a percentage of the number of weeks in the time-period during which absences were recorded on at least four days.

The first pattern of interest for each group/time-period combination was the days of the week on which the weekly maximum number of absences was most frequently recorded. Information for the identification of this pattern was obtained as described in step 2. above. Inspection of the information indicated that for a pattern to be significant, the same day of the week must have been identified as having the highest number of absences in at least thirty per cent of the weeks during the time-period. However, a criterion value of twenty-five per cent was used for some groups, for the period of the school year, where rigid application of the higher criterion value concealed otherwise apparent patterns.

The second pattern of interest for each group/time-period combination was the ordered pairs of the two days of the week on

which most absences were recorded (as described in step 4. above). Inspection of the data indicated that for a pattern to be significant, the same ordered pair must have occurred in at least thirty per cent of the weeks during the time-period.

Patterns identified by applying the above criteria are reported in the text below while more complete data are contained in the tables in Appendix B.

School E1. The following groups were omitted from the analysis: students in Grades I-IV, and in Grade VII. The most commonly occuring day of the week on which the highest number of absences was recorded over the school year was (Table 2:2): for all students, Friday then Monday; for grade level groupings, Monday, although Tuesday occurred as frequently for Grade VIand Friday for at least 30 per cent of the time for Grade V.

Differences between patterns identified for the periods before and after the Christmas break occurred for all groups (Table 2:2). In general, Friday was important before the break and Monday afterwards. However, Tuesday was important after the break, for Grade VI students, and before the break for all girls; Wednesday was important, before the break, for Grade VIII students.

As can be seen from Table 2:2 differences between the patterns for boys and girls were identified as follows: maximum absenteeism occurred most frequently on Friday and Monday for boys, and on Tuesday and Monday for girls.

Ordered pairs of the two days of the week on which most absences were recorded were identified for three of the eighteen group/time-period combinations: Friday-Tuesday for all students before Christmas; Monday-Tuesday for boys and Grade V students after

TABLE 2:2

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School El.

Group[a]	Most Frequently Occurring Days of Maximum Absenteeism		
	Before the Christmas Break	After the Christmas Break	Over the School Year
All Students	Friday	Monday then Friday	Friday then Monday
All Boys	Friday	Monday	Monday
All Girls	Tuesday	Monday then Friday	Monday
Students in:			
Grade 5	Friday	Monday	Monday then Friday
Grade 6	Friday	Tuesday then Monday	Monday and Tuesday
Grade 8	Monday and Wednesday	Monday	Monday

[a]Data are reported only for groups where there were at least eight, twelve or twenty weeks in the periods before and after Christmas, and the school year respectively. Only weeks with more than four days on which absences occurred are included in the report.

Christmas (Tables B:1-B:11, microfiche).

School E2. The following groups were omitted from the analysis: students in Grades III and IV. The most commonly occurring day of the week on which the highest number of absences was recorded over the school year was (Table 2:3): for all students, Friday; for the seven grade level groupings, Monday, Tuesday and Friday each occurred twice.

Differences between patterns identified for the periods before and after the Christmas break occurred for all groups (Table 2:3) although in three instances--Grades I,II and V--no pattern was identified for the latter period. In fact a variety of differences was observed which are: Friday-Tuesday, Wednesday-Tuesday, Tuesday-Thursday, Friday-Monday and Thursday, Friday-Monday, and Monday-Tuesday.

As can be seen from Table 2:3, differences between the patterns for boys and girls were identified for the school year, and before and after Christmas: maximum absenteeism occurred on Monday and Friday for boys; on Tuesday and Wednesday for girls.

Ordered pairs of the two days of the week, on which most absences were recorded were identified as significant for two of the ten group/time-period combinations: Monday-Tuesday for Grade II students before Christmas, and Tuesday-Wednesday for Grade V students before Christmas (Tables B:12-B:24).

School E3. The most commonly occurring day of the week (Table 2:4) on which the maximum number of absences was recorded for all time-periods was--for boys, girls, students in the school, and students in Grades VII and VIII--Monday. No significant differences were found between patterns for different parts of the school

TABLE 2:3

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School E2.

Group[a]	Most Frequently Occurring Days of Maximum Absenteeism		
	Before the Christmas Break	After the Christmas Break	Over the School Year
All Students	Friday	Tuesday	Friday
All Boys	Friday	Friday and Monday	Friday
All Girls	Wednesday	Tuesday	-
Students in:			
Grade 1	Friday	-	Friday
Grade 2	Monday	-	Monday
Grade 5	Tuesday	-	Tuesday
Grade 6	Tuesday then Monday	Thursday	Tuesday
Grade 7	Friday	Monday and Thursday	-
Grade 8	Friday	Monday	Friday
Special Education	Monday	Tuesday	Monday

[a] Data are reported only for groups where there were at least eight, twelve or twenty weeks in the periods before and after Christmas, and the school year, respectively. Only weeks with more than four days on which absences occurred are included in the report.

TABLE 2:4

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School E3.

Group[a]	Most Frequently Occurring Days of Maximum Absenteeism		
	Before the Christmas Break	After the Christmas Break	Over the School Year
All Students	Monday	Monday then Friday	Monday
All Boys	Monday	Monday	Monday
All Girls	Monday	Monday	Monday
Students in:			
Grade 7	Monday	Monday	Monday
Grade 8	Monday	Monday then Friday	Monday

[a] Data are reported only for groups where there were at least eight, twelve or twenty weeks in the periods before and after Christmas, and the school year, respectively. Only weeks with more than four days on which absences occurred are included in the report.

year, different sexes, or different groups (Tables B:25-B:29). However, one ordered pair of the two days of the week on which most absences were recorded was significant: Monday-Friday for students in Grade VII before Christmas.

School E4. The most commonly occurring day of the week on which the highest number of absences was recorded over the school year was (Table 2:5): for all students, Friday then Monday; for the three grade level groups, Friday in two groups, Monday in the other.

Differences between the patterns for the periods before and after Christmas occurred for two of the six groups: Tuesday before Christmas and Friday after Christmas for students in Grade VIII; Monday before Christmas and Monday or Wednesday after Christmas for students in Special Education.

As can be seen from Table 2:5, the pattern of days on which maximum absenteeism occurred was the same for boys as for girls.

The only significant ordered pair of days of the week on which most absences were recorded was Tuesday-Wednesday for students in Grade VI for before Christmas (Tables B:30-B:35).

School E5. The following groups were omitted from the analysis: students in Grades 1 to VI, and in Grade VIII. The most commonly occurring day of the week (Table 2:6) on which the maximum number of absences was recorded, for all time periods and all groups, was Monday. No significant differences were found between patterns for different parts of the year, different sexes, or different groups.

Ordered pairs of the two days of the week on which most absences were recorded, were identified as significant for two of the four group/time-period combinations: Monday-Tuesday for all students and students in Grade VII for before Christmas (Tables B:36-B:46).

TABLE 2: 5

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School E4.

Group[a]	Most Frequently Occurring Days of Maximum Absenteeism		
	Before the Christmas Break	After the Christmas Break	Over the School Year
All Students	Friday then Monday	Friday then Monday	Friday then Monday
All Boys	Friday then Monday	Friday	Friday
All Girls	Friday	Friday	Friday
Students in:			
Grade 7	Friday then Monday	Friday	Friday
8	Tuesday	Friday then Monday	Friday
Special Education	Monday	Monday and Wednesday	Monday

[a] Data are reported only for groups where there were at least eight, twelve or twenty weeks in the periods before and after Christmas, and the school year, respectively. Only weeks with more than four days on which absences occurred are included in the report.

TABLE 2:6

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School E5.

Group[a]	Most Frequently Occurring Days of Maximum Absenteeism		
	Before the Christmas Break	After the Christmas Break	Over the School Year
All Students	Monday	Monday	Monday
All Boys	Monday	-	Monday
All Girls	Monday	Monday	Monday
Students in Grade 7	Monday	Thursday	Monday

[a]Data are reported only for groups where there were at least eight, twelve or twenty weeks in the periods before and after Christmas, and the school year, respectively. Only weeks with more than four days on which absences occurred are included in the report.

School E6. The following group was omitted from the analysis: students in Grade III. The most commonly occurring day of the week on which the highest number of absences was recorded over the school year was (Table 2:7): for all students, Monday then Friday; for the seven grade levels, Monday.

Differences between patterns identified for the periods before and after Christmas were considered significant (Table 2:7) for only two of the seven groups where comparisons were possible: boys in the school, where Friday occurred most frequently before Christmas and Monday after Christmas; students in Grade VI, where Tuesday occurred most frequently before Christmas and Monday afterwards. The general pattern of Monday occurring most frequently both before and after Christmas varied for some other groups by the existence of other days with percentage frequencies of occurrence of at least thirty per cent.

As can be seen from Table 2:7, differences between the patterns for boys and girls were identified for the school year and parts of the school year: maximum absenteeism occurred most frequently on Friday and Monday for boys and Monday and Tuesday for girls.

Ordered pairs of the two days of the week, on which most absences were recorded, were identified as significant for three of the twenty-nine group/time-period combinations: Monday-Tuesday for students in Grade II for the periods after Christmas and the school year; and Tuesday-Monday for Grade VI students before Christmas (Tables B:47-B:58).

School E7. The most commonly occurring day of the week on which the highest number of absences was recorded over the school year was (Table 2:8): Friday then Monday for all students; Friday,

TABLE 2:7

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School E6.

Group[a]	Most Frequently Occurring Days of Maximum Absenteeism		
	Before the Christmas Break	After the Christmas Break	Over the School Year
All Students	Monday then Friday	Monday	Monday then Friday
All Boys	Friday	Monday	Friday then Monday
All Girls	Monday	Monday and Tuesday	Monday
Students in:			
Grade 1	Monday	Monday	Monday
Grade 2	Monday	Monday	Monday
Grade 4	Monday and Friday	Monday	Monday
Grade 5	-	-	Monday
Grade 6	Tuesday	Monday	Monday
Grade 7	Monday and Thursday	Monday	Monday
Grade 8	-	Monday and Tuesday	Monday

[a] Data are reported only for groups where there were at least eight, twelve or twenty weeks in the periods before and after Christmas, and the school year, respectively. Only weeks with more than four days on which absences occurred are included in the report.

TABLE 2:8

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School E7.

Group[a]	Most Frequently Occurring Days of Maximum Absenteeism		
	Before the Christmas Break	After the Christmas Break	Over the School Year
All Students	Friday	Monday	Friday then Monday
All Boys	Monday	Monday	Monday
All Girls	Friday	Monday then Friday	Friday
Students in:			
Grade 7	Friday	Monday and Friday	Friday
Grade 8	Monday	Friday	Monday and Friday

[a] Data are reported only for groups where there were at least eight, twelve or twenty weeks in the periods before and after Christmas, and the school year, respectively. Only weeks with more than four days on which absences occurred are included in the report.

for Grade V11, and both Friday and Monday for Grade V111.

Differences between patterns identified for the periods before and after Christmas occurred for five of the six groups (Table 2:8) and all involved only Monday and Friday.

As can be seen from Table 2:8, differences between the patterns for boys and girls were identified as follows: the day of the week on which the highest number of absences was recorded for boys was Monday, and Friday for girls in the two time periods before Christmas and the school year.

No ordered pairs of the two days of the week on which the highest numbers of absences were recorded were considered significant (Tables B:59-B:63).

School E8. Grade 1V students were the only group omitted from analysis. The most commonly occurring day of the week on which the highest number of absences was recorded over the school year was (Table 2:9): for all students, Monday; for grade level groups, Monday.

Differences between patterns identified before and after Christmas occurred for three of the ten groups: Tuesday and Monday both occurred most frequently before Christmas and Monday most frequently after Christmas for girls in the school; Tuesday and Wednesday occurred most, and equally, frequently before Christmas, and Monday most frequently after Christmas, for students in Grade 111; and Tuesday before Christmas and Monday after Christmas for Grade V111.

Ordered pairs of the two days of the week on which the highest numbers of absences were recorded were identified (Tables B:64-B:74) as significant for six of the thirty group/time-period combinations: Monday-Wednesday for students in Grade 11 for the school year; Monday-Tuesday for students in Grade 111 for the school year

TABLE 2:9

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School E8.

Group[a]	Most Frequently Occurring Days of Maximum Absenteeism		
	Before the Christmas Break	After the Christmas Break	Over the School Year
All Students	Monday	Monday	Monday
All Boys	Monday	Monday	Monday
All Girls	Monday and Tuesday	Monday	Monday
Students in:			
Grade 1	Monday	-	Monday
Grade 2	Monday	Monday	Monday
Grade 3	Tuesday and Wednesday	Monday	Monday
Grade 5	Monday	Monday	Monday
Grade 6	Monday	Monday	Monday
Grade 7	Monday	Monday	Monday
Grade 8	Tuesday	Monday	Monday

[a] Data are reported only for groups where there were at least eight, twelve or twenty weeks in the periods before and after Christmas, and the school year, respectively. Only weeks with more than four days on which absences occurred are included in the report.

and after Christmas, Grade VI before Christmas and Grades VII and VIII, after Christmas.

School A1. The most commonly occurring day of the week on which the highest number of absences was recorded over the school year was (Table 2:10): for all students Monday then Friday; for the grade level groups, Monday and Friday except for Grades X and XIII where only Monday occurred at least thirty per cent of the time.

Differences between patterns identified for the periods before and after Christmas occurred for two of the eight groups: Grade X Monday and Tuesday before Christmas, and Monday and Friday after Christmas; and Grade XIII Thursday before Christmas and Monday and Friday after Christmas. As can be seen from Table 2:10 there were no differences between the patterns identified for boys and girls.

Ordered pairs of the two days of the week on which the highest numbers of absences were recorded, were identified as significant (Tables B:75-B:82) for three of the twenty-four group/time-period combinations: Monday-Friday, for girls in the school after Christmas; Friday-Monday, for students in Grade XII after Christmas.

School A2. The following groups were omitted from the analysis: students in Grades XII and XIII and Special Education. The most commonly occurring day of the week on which the highest number of absences was recorded over the school year was (Table 2:11): for all students Friday then Monday; for Grade X Friday; for Grade XI Friday then Tuesday.

Differences between patterns identified for the periods before and after Christmas occurred for all six groups. As can be seen from Table 2:11, the differences between the patterns identified for boys and girls is slight for the period before Christmas and

TABLE 2:10

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School A1.

Group[a]	Most Frequently Occurring Days of Maximum Absenteeism		
	Before the Christmas Break	After the Christmas Break	Over the School Year
All Students	Monday	Friday then Monday	Monday then Friday
All Boys	Monday	Friday then Monday	Monday then Friday
All Girls	Monday	Friday then Monday	Monday then Friday
Students in:			
Grade 9	Monday then Friday	Friday then Monday	Friday then Monday
Grade 10	Monday then Tuesday	Monday and Friday	Monday
Grade 11	Monday	Monday and Friday	Monday then Friday
Grade 12	Monday then Friday	Friday	Friday then Monday
Grade 13	Thursday	Monday and Friday	Monday

[a]Data are reported only for groups where there were at least eight, twelve or twenty weeks in the periods before and after Christmas, and the school year, respectively. Only weeks with more than four days on which absences occurred are included in the report.

TABLE 2:11

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School A2.

Group[a]	Most Frequently Occurring Days of Maximum Absenteeism		
	Before the Christmas Break	After the Christmas Break	Over the School Year
All Students	Friday	Monday	Friday then Monday
All Boys	Monday then Friday	Tuesday	Monday
All Girls	Friday	Monday	Monday and Friday
Students in:			
Grade 9	Friday	Monday then Tuesday	-
Grade 10	Thursday and Friday	Monday then Friday	Friday
Grade 11	Tuesday then Monday	Friday	Friday then Tuesday

[a]Data are reported only for groups where there were at least eight, twelve or twenty weeks in the periods before and after Christmas, and the school year, respectively. Only weeks with more than four days on which absences occurred are included in the report.

over the school year, however, for the period after Christmas Tuesday occurred most frequently for boys and Monday for girls.

Ordered pairs of the two days of the week on which the highest numbers of absences were recorded were identified as significant for one group/time-period combination (Tables B:83-B:91): Friday-Wednesday for students in Grade XI.

School A3. The most commonly occurring day of the week on which the highest number of absences was recorded over the school year was (Table 2:12): for all students Friday; for Grades X through XIII Friday; for Grade IX Wednesday.

Differences between patterns identified for the periods before and after Christmas were considered significant only for two of the eight groups, students in Grades IX and XI. As can be seen from Table 2:12, there are no significant differences between the patterns identified for boys and girls.

No order pairs of the two days of the week, on which the highest numbers of absences were recorded, were identified as significant (Tables B:92-B:99).

School C1. The most commonly occurring day of the week on which the highest number of absences was recorded over the school year was (Table 2:13): Friday for all groups and all time periods, except for students in Grade IX before Christmas. In this case Monday occurred most frequently. Thus there were no differences between and among patterns over the school year identified for students grouped by sex or grade level and only one difference was detected for different parts of the year (as described above for students in Grade IX).

Two ordered pairs of the two days of the week on which the

TABLE 2:12

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School A3.

Group[a]	Most Frequently Occurring Days of Maximum Absenteeism		
	Before the Christmas Break	After the Christmas Break	Over the School Year
All Students	Friday then Monday	Friday	Friday
All Boys	Friday then Monday	Friday	Friday
All Girls	Friday	Friday	Friday
Students in:			
Grade 9	Wednesday	Monday	Wednesday
Grade 10	Friday	Friday	Friday
Grade 11	Tuesday	Friday	Friday
Grade 12	Friday	-	Friday
Grade 13	-	Friday	Friday

[a] Data are reported only for groups where there were at least eight, twelve or twenty weeks in the periods before and after Christmas, and the school year, respectively. Only weeks with more than four days on which absences occurred are included in the report.

TABLE 2:13

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School Cl.

Group[a]	Most Frequently Occurring Days of Maximum Absenteeism		
	Before the Christmas Break	After the Christmas Break	Over the School Year
All Students	Friday	Friday	Friday
All Boys	Friday	Friday	Friday
All Girls	Friday	Friday	Friday
Students in:			
Grade 9	Monday	Friday	Friday
Grade 10	Friday	Friday	Friday
Grade 11	Friday	Friday	Friday
Grade 12	Friday	Friday	Friday
Grade 13	Friday	Friday	Friday

[a]Data are reported only for groups where there were at least eight, twelve or twenty weeks in the periods before and after Christmas, and the school year, respectively. Only weeks with more than four days on which absences occurred are included in the report.

highest numbers of absences were recorded, were identified: Friday-Thursday for seven of the twenty-four group/time-period combinations and Friday-Monday for two group/time-period combinations (Tables B:100-B:107).

School C2. The most commonly occurring day of the week on which the highest number of absences was recorded over the school year was (Table 2:14): for all students Friday; for grade level groups Friday, Monday also occurred in addition to Friday for Grades IX and XII.

Although there were differences in patterns identified for the time periods before and after Christmas for all the groups except students in Grade XIII, the only significant difference was found to be for Grade X. In this case, the pattern was Friday before Christmas and Monday after Christmas.

As can be seen from Table 2:14, there are no significant differences between the patterns identified for boys and girls.

Of the ordered pairs of the two days of the week on which the highest numbers of absences were recorded, only one was considered significant: Monday-Wednesday for students in Grade XII for the time period before Christmas (Tables B:108-B:115).

School C3. The most commonly occurring day of the week on which the highest number of absences was recorded over the school year was (Table 2:15): for all students Friday, for grade level groups Friday, then Monday.

Differences between patterns identified for the periods before and after Christmas were considered significant for two of the eight groups namely: students in Grades IX and XIII. In these grades the days occurring most frequently before and after Christmas

TABLE 2:14

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School C2.

Group[a]	Most Frequently Occurring Days of Maximum Absenteeism		
	Before the Christmas Break	After the Christmas Break	Over the School Year
All Students	Friday	Monday and Friday	Friday
All Boys	Friday then Monday	Friday	Friday
All Girls	Friday	Monday then Friday	Friday then Monday
Students in:			
Grade 9	Monday then Friday	Monday then Friday	Monday then Friday
Grade 10	Friday	Monday	Friday
Grade 11	Friday	Friday then Monday	Friday
Grade 12	Monday	Monday then Friday	Monday then Friday
Grade 13	Friday	Friday	Friday

[a]Data are reported only for groups where there were at least eight, twelve or twenty weeks in the periods before and after Christmas, and the school year, respectively. Only weeks with more than four days on which absences occurred are included in the report.

TABLE 2:15

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School C3.

Group[a]	Most Frequently Occurring Days of Maximum Absenteeism		
	Before the Christmas Break	After the Christmas Break	Over the School Year
All Students	Friday	Friday	Friday
All Boys	Friday then Monday	Friday	Friday
All Girls	Friday	Friday	Friday
Students in:			
Grade 9	Monday	Tuesday	Monday
Grade 10	Friday	Friday	Friday
Grade 11	Friday then Monday	Friday then Monday	Friday then Monday
Grade 12	Friday then Tuesday	Friday	Friday
Grade 13	Friday	Monday	Monday then Friday

[a]Data are reported only for groups where there were at least eight, twelve or twenty weeks in the periods before and after Christmas, and the school year, respectively. Only weeks with more than four days on which absences occurred are included in the report.

were Monday and Tuesday, and Friday and Monday respectively; Grade XII students had Tuesday occurring at least thirty per cent of the time before Christmas.

As can be seen from Table 2:15, there are no significant differences between the patterns identified for boys and girls.

Ordered pairs of the two days of the week on which the highest numbers of absences were recorded, were identified for six of the twenty-four group/time-period combinations. Friday-Monday was the significant ordered pair for all students both before and after Christmas; all boys, both before and after Christmas; and students in Grade XI before Christmas. The order pair Friday-Tuesday was most common for Grade XIII, for before Christmas (Tables B:116-B:123).

School C4. The following group was omitted from the analysis: students in Grade XII. The most commonly occurring day of the week on which the highest number of absences was recorded over the school year was (Table 2:16): for all students Friday; for Grades IX and XI, Tuesday; for Grade X, Monday; for Grade XIII, Friday.

Differences between patterns identified for the periods before and after Christmas were observed for five of the seven groups but only considered significant for three groups where the days occurring most frequently before and after Christmas, respectively, were: Tuesday or Friday and Monday; Friday and Tuesday; Wednesday and Tuesday.

As can be seen from Table 2:16, differences between the patterns identified for boys and girls exist for each time period but are more apparent for the periods before and after Christmas.

No ordered pairs of the two days of the week on which the

TABLE 2:16

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School C4.

Group[a]	Most Frequently Occurring Days of Maximum Absenteeism		
	Before the Christmas Break	After the Christmas Break	Over the School Year
All Students	Friday	Friday then Tuesday	Friday
All Boys	Tuesday and Friday	Monday	Tuesday and Friday
All Girls	Friday	Tuesday	Tuesday
Students in:			
Grade 9	Wednesday	Tuesday	Tuesday
Grade 10	Monday	Monday	Monday
Grade 11	Tuesday	Tuesday	Tuesday
Grade 13	Friday	Friday then Monday	Friday

[a]Data are reported only for groups where there were at least eight, twelve or twenty weeks in the periods before and after Christmas, and the school year, respectively. Only weeks with more than four days on which absences occurred are included in the report.

highest numbers of absences were recorded were identified (Tables B:124-B:129).

School C5. The most commonly occuring day of the week on which the highest number of absences was recorded over the school year was (Table 2:17): for all students Friday; for grade level groups Friday then Monday. Differences between patterns identified for the periods before and after Christmas were considered significant only for students in Grade XIII where Wednesday occurred most frequently before Christmas and Friday after Christmas.

As can be seen from Table 2:17, differences do exist between the patterns identified for boys and girls: the days of the week on which the highest numbers of absences were recorded tended to occur most frequently on Friday for boys and Monday for girls.

No ordered pairs of the two days of the week on which the highest number of absences was recorded were identified (Tables B:130-B:137).

School C6. The most commonly occurring day of the week on which the highest number of absences was recorded over the school year was (Table 2:18): for all students Friday, for grade level groups Friday, Thursday and Monday.

Differences between patterns identified for the periods before and after Christmas were considered significant for two of the six groups where comparisons were possible: students in Grade X where Monday occurred most frequently before Christmas and Friday and Tuesday after; students in Grade XIII where Thursday occurred most frequently before Christmas and Wednesday after Christmas.

As can be seen from Table 2:18, no significant differences exist between the patterns identified for boys and girls for the three

TABLE 2:17

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School C5.

Group[a]	Most Frequently Occurring Days of Maximum Absenteeism		
	Before the Christmas Break	After the Christmas Break	Over the School Year
All Students	Friday	Monday and Friday	Friday
All Boys	Friday	Monday and Friday	Friday
All Girls	-	Monday	Monday
Students in:			
Grade 10	Monday	Friday then Monday	Monday and Friday
Grade 11	-	Monday	Monday
Grade 12	Friday	Friday then Monday	Friday
Grade 13	Wednesday	Friday	Friday

[a]Data are reported only for groups where there were at least eight, twelve or twenty weeks in the periods before and after Christmas, and the school year, respectively. Only weeks with more than four days on which absences occurred are included in the report.

TABLE 2:18

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School C6.

Group[a]	Most Frequently Occurring Days of Maximum Absenteeism		
	Before the Christmas Break	After the Christmas Break	Over the School Year
All Students	Friday	Friday	Friday
All Boys	Friday	Friday	Friday
All Girls	-	Friday	Friday
Students in:			
Grade 9	Monday	Monday	Monday
Grade 10	Monday	Friday then Tuesday	Friday
Grade 11	Friday	Friday	Friday
Grade 12	-	Thursday and Friday	Thursday and Friday
Grade 13	Thursday	Wednesday	Thursday

[a]Data are reported only for groups where there were at least eight, twelve or twenty weeks in the periods before and after Christmas, and the school year, respectively. Only weeks with more than four days on which absences occurred are included in the report.

time periods.

Ordered pairs of the two days of the week on which most absences were recorded were identified as significant for three group/time-period combinations: Monday-Tuesday for students in Grade IX, for before Christmas; Friday-Monday for students in Grade XI, for both the school year and before Christmas (Tables B:138-B:145).

School C7. The most commonly occurring day of the week on which the highest number of absences was recorded over the school year was (Table 2:19): for all students, Friday; for grade level groups, Friday.

As can be seen from Table 2:19, no significant differences exist between the patterns identified for different sexes or parts of the year.

One ordered pair of the two days of the week on which most absences were recorded was identified for five group/time-period combinations: Friday-Monday for all students, for all time periods, for all girls and students in Grade X, for before Christmas (Tables B:146-B:153).

School C8. The following groups were omitted from the analysis: students in Grades XI to XIII. The most commonly occurring day of the week on which the highest number of absences was recorded over the school year was (Table2:20): for all students Monday then Friday; for Grades IX and X, Monday and Friday.

As can be seen from Table 2:20, no significant differences exist between the patterns identified for different sexes or parts of the year.

Ordered pairs of the two days of the week on which most absences were recorded were identified for two group/time-period combinations: Friday-Monday for all boys for before Christmas;

TABLE 2:19

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School C7.

Group[a]	Most Frequently Occurring Days of Maximum Absenteeism		
	Before the Christmas Break	After the Christmas Break	Over the School Year
All Students	Friday	Friday	Friday
All Boys	Friday	Friday then Monday	Friday
All Girls	Friday	Friday	Friday
Students in:			
Grade 9	Monday then Friday	Friday	Friday
Grade 10	Friday then Monday	Friday	Friday
Grade 11	Friday	Friday	Friday
Grade 12	Friday	Monday then Friday	Friday
Special Education	Friday then Monday	-	Friday

[a]Data are reported only for groups where there were at least eight, twelve or twenty weeks in the periods before and after Christmas, and the school year, respectively. Only weeks with more than four days on which absences occurred are included in the report.

TABLE 2:20

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School C8.

Group[a]	Most Frequently Occurring Days of Maximum Absenteeism		
	Before the Christmas Break	After the Christmas Break	Over the School Year
All Students	Friday then Monday	Monday then Friday	Monday then Friday
All Boys	Friday	Monday	Monday then Friday
All Girls	Monday then Friday	Monday then Friday	Monday then Friday
Students in:			
Grade 9	Monday	Monday	Monday
Grade 10	Friday then Monday	Monday then Friday	Friday then Monday

[a]Data are reported only for groups where there were at least eight, twelve or twenty weeks in the periods before and after Christmas, and the school year, respectively. Only weeks with more than four days on which absences occurred are included in the report.

Monday-Tuesday for students in Grade IX for before Christmas (Tables B:154-B161).

School C9. The most commonly occurring day of the week on which the highest number of absences was recorded over the school year was (Table 2:21): for all students, Friday; for grade level groups, Friday occurred at least thirty per cent of the time for all groups as did Monday for students in Grade X.

Differences between patterns identified for the period before and after Christmas were considered significant only for students in Grade XIII, where Friday occurred most frequently before Christmas and Monday afterwards (Table 2:21).

As can be seen from Table 2:21, no differences were observed between the patterns identified for boys and girls.

One order pair, Friday-Monday, of the two days of the week on which most absences were recorded was considered significant for five group/time-period combinations: all students for before Christmas; all boys for before Christmas and over the school year; students in Grade XI for before Christmas; students in Grade XII for after Christmas (Tables B:162-B:171).

School C10. The most commonly occurring day of the week on which the highest number of absences was recorded over the school year (Table 2:22) was for all students Friday; for grade level groups, Friday and Monday.

Only one difference between patterns was identified for the periods before and after Christmas: for girls in the school Monday occurred most frequently before Christmas and Friday afterwards.

As can be seen from Table 2:22, differences between the patterns identified for boys and girls were observed for two time periods:

TABLE 2:21

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School C9.

Group[a]	Most Frequently Occuring Days of Maximum Absenteeism		
	Before the Christmas Break	After the Christmas Break	Over the School Year
All Students	Friday	Friday	Friday
All Boys	Friday	Friday	Friday
All Girls	Friday	Friday	Friday
Students in:			
Grade 9	Friday	Friday	Friday
Grade 10	Friday	Monday then Friday	Monday and Friday
Grade 11	Friday	Friday	Friday
Grade 12	Friday	Friday	Friday
Grade 13	Friday	Monday	Friday

[a]Data are reported only for groups where there were at least eight, twelve or twenty weeks in the periods before and after Christmas, and the school year, respectively. Only weeks with more than four days on which absences occurred are included in the report.

TABLE 2:22

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School C10.

Group[a]	Most Frequently Occurring Days of Maximum Absenteeism		
	Before the Christmas Break	After the Christmas Break	Over the School Year
All Students	Friday	Friday	Friday
All Boys	Friday	Friday	Friday
All Girls	Monday	Friday	Monday then Friday
Students in:			
Grade 9	Friday	-	Friday
Grade 10	Monday	Monday	Monday
Grade 11	Friday	Friday	Friday
Grade 12	Friday	Monday then Friday	Friday then Monday
Grade 13	Monday	Monday	Monday

[a]Data are reported only for groups where there were at least eight, twelve or twenty weeks in the periods before and after Christmas, and the school year, respectively. Only weeks with more than four days on which absences occurred are included in the report.

for before Christmas, Friday occurred most frequently for boys and Monday for girls; over the school year Friday occurred most frequently for boys and Monday then Friday for girls.

One ordered pair, Friday-Monday, of the two days of the week, on which most absences were recorded was identified for two group/time-period combinations; students in Grades IX and XI, for before Christmas (Tables B:172-B:179).

School V1. The most commonly occurring day of the week on which the highest number of absences was recorded over the school year was (Table 2:23): for all groups, Friday. As can be seen from Table 2:23, no significant differences exist between the patterns identified for different sexes or parts of the year.

One ordered pair, Friday-Monday, of the two days of the week, on which most absences were recorded was identified for two group/time-period combinations: students in Grades IX and XI, for before Christmas (Tables B:180-B:186).

School V2. The following group was omitted from the analysis: students in Grade VIII. The most commonly occurring day of the week on which the highest number of absences was recorded over the school year, was (Table 2:24): for all students, Friday; for grade level groups, Friday then Tuesday and Monday.

Differences between patterns identified for the periods before and after Christmas were considered significant for three of the seven groups: all boys, students in Grade IX and in Special Education (Table 2:24).

As can be seen from Table 2:24, differences between patterns identified for boys and girls were significant for one time period, before Christmas, where Tuesday occurred most frequently for boys

TABLE 2:23

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School V1.

Group[a]	Most Frequently Occurring Days of Maximum Absenteeism		
	Before the Christmas Break	After the Christmas Break	Over the School Year
All Students	Friday	Friday	Friday
All Boys	Friday	Friday	Friday
All Girls	Friday	Friday	Friday
Students in:			
Grade 9	Friday	Friday	Friday
Grade 10	Friday	Friday then Monday	Friday
Grade 11	Friday	Friday	Friday
Grade 12	Friday	Friday	Friday

[a]Data are reported only for groups where there were at least eight, twelve or twenty weeks in the periods before and after Christmas, and the school year, respectively. Only weeks with more than four days on which absences occurred are included in the report.

TABLE 2:24

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences was Most Frequently Recorded for School V2.

Group[a]	Most Frequently Occurring Days of Maximum Absenteeism		
	Before the Christmas Break	After the Christmas Break	Over the School Year
All Students	Monday	Friday then Monday	Friday
All Boys	Tuesday	Friday then Monday	Friday
All Girls	Friday	Friday	Friday
Students in:			
Grade 7	Friday then Tuesday	Friday	Friday
Grade 9	Wednesday and Friday	Friday	Friday
Grade 10	Tuesday	-	Tuesday
Special Education	Tuesday	Monday	Monday

[a]Data are reported only for groups where there were at least eight, twelve or twenty weeks in the periods before and after Christmas, and the school year, respectively. Only weeks with more than four days on which absences occurred are included in the report.

and Friday for girls.

One ordered pair, Friday-Tuesday, of the two days of the week, on which most absences were recorded, was observed for all students (Tables B:187-B:195).

School V3. The most commonly occuring day of the week on which the highest number of absences was recorded over the school year, was (Table 2:25): for all students, Friday then Monday; for grade level groups, Monday then Friday.

No significant differences were observed between patterns identified for the periods before and after Christmas (Table 2:25).

As can be seen from Table 2:25, differences between the patterns identified for boys and girls were considered significant only for the period before Christmas, where Monday occurred most frequently for boys and Friday for girls.

One ordered pair, Friday-Monday, of the two days of the week, on which most absences were recorded, was considered significant for all students after Christmas (Tables B:196-B:203).

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students

Patterns of absenteeism are reported independently for each school. Patterns were identified for students with more than ten absences in the school year and for three sub groups comprising, respectively, students with eleven to twenty, twenty-one to forty, and more than forty absences in the school year.

Two weekly patterns of absenteeism were investigated for each group of students within each school. The first of these patterns was the day of the week which was the day of maximum absenteeism for a significant proportion of students. For each day of the week the number of students, for whom that was the day of maximum absenteeism,

TABLE 2:25

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools: Days of the Week on Which the Weekly Maximum Number of Absences were Most Frequently Recorded for School V3.

Group[a]	Most Frequently Occurring Days of Maximum Absenteeism		
	Before the Christmas Break	After the Christmas Break	Over the School Year
All Students	Friday	Friday then Monday	Friday then Monday
All Boys	Monday	Monday and Friday	Friday then Monday
All Girls	Friday	Friday then Monday	Friday then Monday
Students in:			
Grade 8	Friday	Friday	Friday
Grade 9	Friday then Monday	Monday and Friday	Friday then Monday
Grade 10	-	Monday	Monday
Grade 11	Friday	Friday then Monday	Monday and Friday
Grade 12	Monday	Monday	Monday

[a]Data are reported only for groups where there were at least eight, twelve or twenty weeks in the periods before and after Christmas, and the school year, respectively. Only weeks with more than four days on which absences occurred are included in the report.

was expressed as a percentage of the total number of students in the group. If the five days of the school week occurred equally often, as the day of maximum absenteeism, then each day would be observed for twenty per cent of the students in the group being analyzed. Consequently a judgement was made that for a pattern to be considered significant a given day of the week must have been observed, as the day of maximum absenteeism, for at least thirty per cent of the students in the group being analyzed.

The second weekly pattern of absenteeism investigated was the pair of days of the week, arranged in descending order of the number of absences, which was observed for a significant proportion of the students in the group being analyzed. If the sixteen possible ordered pairs of days occurred equally among students then each pair would be observed for 6.25 per cent of the students. Consequently, a judgement was made that a given ordered pair of days must have been observed for at least ten per cent of the students, in the group being analyzed, for a pattern to be considered significant.

The above patterns were investigated for groups with forty or more students. Forty was chosen as the criterion value on the basis that: (1) undue influence of anomalous student patterns would be avoided; and (2) patterns would not be obscured by the identification, as significant, of an excessive number of days or pairs of days.

The first of the two weekly patterns of absenteeism--the day of the week which was the day of maximum absenteeism for a significant number students--was considered significant for only three groups of students in the sample schools (Tables 2:26-2:49): Wednesday for students with more than ten absences in School E5; Wed-

TABLE 2:26

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Ordered Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School E1.

Day of Week, Rank 1	Day of Week, Rank 2					
	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Total[a]
Monday	-	0.0[b]	6.5	6.5	8.1	21.0
		0.0[c]	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		0.0[d]	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		0.0[e]	6.3	6.3	7.9	20.6
Tuesday	3.2	-	9.7	3.2	9.7	25.8
	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	3.2		9.5	3.2	9.3	25.4
Wednesday	1.6	4.8	-	1.6	6.5	14.5
	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0
	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0
	1.6	4.8		1.6	6.3	14.3
Thursday	3.2	3.2	4.8	-	4.8	16.1
	100.0	0.0	0.0		0.0	100.0
	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0
	4.8	3.2	4.8		4.8	17.5
Friday	6.5	9.7	3.2	3.2	-	22.6
	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0
	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0
	6.3	9.5	3.2	3.2		22.2
Total	14.5	17.7	24.2	14.5	29.1	100 (62)[f]
	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100 (1)
	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100 (0)
	15.7	17.5	23.8	14.3	28.5	100 (63)

[a] Totals may not equal the sum of table entries due to rounding.
[b] Data for students with 11-20 absences in the school year.
[c] Data for students with 21-40 absences in the school year.
[d] Data for students with more than 40 absences in the school year.
[e] Total for students with more than 10 absences in the school year.
[f] Numbers in parentheses show the number of students in each level of absenteeism.

TABLE 2:27

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Ordered Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School E2.

Day of Week, Rank 1	Day of Week, Rank 2					
	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Total[a]
Monday	-	4.2[b]	7.3	3.1	5.2	19.8
		10.0[c]	3.3	3.3	6.7	23.3
		0.0[d]	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		5.4[e]	6.2	3.1	5.4	20.2
Tuesday	5.2	-	6.3	3.1	8.3	22.9
	0.0		6.7	0.0	10.0	16.7
	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	3.9		6.2	2.3	8.5	20.9
Wednesday	7.3	4.2	-	5.2	2.1	18.7
	10.0	0.0		0.0	3.3	13.3
	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0
	7.8	3.1		3.9	2.3	17.1
Thursday	0.0	4.2	2.1	-	9.4	15.6
	3.3	0.0	0.0		13.3	16.7
	0.0	66.7	33.3		0.0	100.0
	0.8	4.7	2.3		10.1	17.8
Friday	5.2	2.1	7.3	8.3	-	22.9
	6.7	13.3	0.0	10.0		30.0
	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0
	5.4	4.7	5.4	8.5		24.0
Total	17.7	14.7	23.0	19.7	25.0	100 (96)[f]
	20.0	23.3	10.0	13.3	33.3	100 (30)
	0.0	66.7	33.3	0.0	0.0	100 (3)
	17.9	17.9	20.1	17.8	26.3	100 (129)

[a] Totals may not equal the sum of table entries due to rounding.
[b] Data for students with 11-20 absences in the school year.
[c] Data for students with 21-40 absences in the school year.
[d] Data for students with more than 40 absences in the school year.
[e] Total for students with more than 10 absences in the school year.
[f] Numbers in parentheses show the number of students in each level of absenteeism.

TABLE 2:28

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Ordered Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School E3.

Day of Week, Rank 1	Day of Week, Rank 2					
	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Total[a]
Monday	-	6.0[b]	6.0	8.0	8.0	28.0
		0.0[c]	0.0	33.3	0.0	33.0
		0.0[d]	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		5.7[e]	5.7	9.4	7.5	28.3
Tuesday	6.0	-	2.0	4.0	6.0	18.0
	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	5.7		1.9	3.8	5.7	17.0
Wednesday	0.0	4.0	-	0.0	4.0	8.0
	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0
	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0
	0.0	3.8		0.0	3.8	7.5
Thursday	10.0	2.0	6.0	-	4.0	22.0
	0.0	33.3	0.0		0.0	33.0
	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0
	9.4	3.8	5.7		3.8	22.6
Friday	4.0	4.0	4.0	12.0	-	24.0
	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0		33.3
	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0
	5.7	3.8	3.8	11.3		24.6
Total	20.0	16.0	18.0	24.0	22.0	100 (50)[f]
	33.3	33.3	0.0	33.3	0.0	100 (3)
	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100 (0)
	20.8	17.1	17.1	24.5	20.8	100 (53)

[a] Totals may not equal the sum of table entries due to rounding.
[b] Data for students with 11-20 absences in the school year.
[c] Data for students with 21-40 absences in the school year.
[d] Data for students with more than 40 absences in the school year.
[e] Total for students with more than 10 absences in the school year.
[f] Numbers in parentheses show the number of students in each level of absenteeism.

TABLE 2:29

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Ordered Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School E4.

Day of Week, Rank 1	Day of Week, Rank 2					
	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Total[a]
Monday	-	0.0[b]	6.3	0.0	0.0	6.3
		0.0[c]	50.0	0.0	0.0	50.0
		0.0[d]	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		0.0[e]	11.1	0.0	0.0	11.1
Tuesday	6.3	-	18.8	6.3	12.5	43.8
	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	5.6		16.7	5.6	11.1	38.9
Wednesday	0.0	6.3	-	18.8	6.3	31.3
	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0
	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0
	0.0	5.6		16.7	5.6	27.8
Thursday	0.0	0.0	6.3	-	6.3	12.5
	0.0	0.0	0.0		50.0	50.0
	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0
	0.0	0.0	5.6		11.1	16.7
Friday	0.0	6.3	0.0	0.0	-	6.3
	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0
	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0
	0.0	5.6	0.0	0.0		5.6
Total	6.3	12.6	31.4	25.1	25.1	100 (16)[f]
	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	50.0	100 (2)
	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100 (0)
	5.6	11.2	33.4	22.3	27.8	100 (18)

[a] Totals may not equal the sum of table entries due to rounding.
[b] Data for students with 11-20 absences in the school year.
[c] Data for students with 21-40 absences in the school year.
[d] Data for students with more than 40 absences in the school year.
[e] Total for students with more than 10 absences in the school year.
[f] Numbers in parentheses show the number of students in each level of absenteeism.

TABLE 2:30

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Ordered Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School E5.

Day of Week, Rank 1	Day of Week, Rank 2					
	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Total[a]
Monday	-	3.7[b]	7.4	3.7	7.4	22.2
		0.0[c]	0.0	12.5	0.0	12.5
		0.0[d]	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
		2.3[e]	4.5	9.1	4.5	20.5
Tuesday	3.7	-	3.7	3.7	3.7	14.8
	12.5		0.0	0.0	6.3	18.8
	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	6.8		2.3	2.3	4.5	15.9
Wednesday	7.4	11.1	-	14.8	3.7	37.0
	6.3	0.0		12.5	12.5	31.3
	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0
	6.8	6.8		13.6	6.8	34.1
Thursday	7.4	0.0	11.1	-	7.4	25.9
	0.0	0.0	12.5		6.3	18.8
	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0
	4.5	0.0	11.4		6.8	22.7
Friday	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	0.0
	6.3	6.3	6.3	0.0		18.8
	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0
	2.3	2.3	2.3	0.0		6.8
Total	18.5	14.8	22.2	22.2	22.2	100 (27)[f]
	25.1	6.3	18.8	25.0	25.1	100 (16)
	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100 (1)
	20.4	11.4	20.5	25.0	22.6	100 (44)

[a] Totals may not equal the sum of table entries due to rounding.
[b] Data for students with 11-20 absences in the school year.
[c] Data for students with 21-40 absences in the school year.
[d] Data for students with more than 40 absences in the school year.
[e] Total for students with more than 10 absences in the school year.
[f] Numbers in parentheses show the number of students in each level of absenteeism.

TABLE 2:31

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Ordered Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School E6.

Day of Week, Rank 1	Day of Week, Rank 2					
	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Total[a]
Monday	-	7.0[b]	4.4	5.3	1.8	18.4
		3.7[c]	3.7	3.7	0.0	11.1
		0.0[d]	50.0	0.0	0.0	50.0
		6.3[e]	4.9	4.9	1.4	17.5
Tuesday	6.1	-	5.3	1.8	5.3	18.4
	7.4		7.4	7.4	0.0	22.2
	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	6.3		5.6	2.8	4.2	18.9
Wednesday	7.9	3.5	-	1.8	4.4	17.5
	7.4	0.0		3.7	3.7	14.8
	50.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	50.0
	8.4	2.8		2.1	4.2	17.5
Thursday	5.3	4.4	7.0	-	5.3	21.9
	3.7	3.7	3.7		11.1	22.2
	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0
	4.9	4.2	6.3		6.3	21.7
Friday	13.2	4.4	4.4	1.8	-	23.7
	3.7	11.1	11.1	3.7		29.6
	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0
	11.2	5.6	5.6	2.1		24.5
Total	32.5	19.3	21.1	10.7	16.8	100 (114)[f]
	22.2	18.5	25.9	18.5	14.8	100 (27)
	50.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	100 (2)
	30.8	18.9	22.4	11.9	16.3	100 (143)

[a] Totals may not equal the sum of table entries due to rounding.
[b] Data for students with 11-20 absences in the school year.
[c] Data for students with 21-40 absences in the school year.
[d] Data for students with more than 40 absences in the school year.
[e] Total for students with more than 10 absences in the school year.
[f] Numbers in parentheses show the number of students in each level of absenteeism.

TABLE 2:32

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Ordered Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School E7.

Day of Week, Rank 1	Day of Week, Rank 2						
	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Total[a]	
Monday	-	6.4[b]	0.6	3.5	2.9	13.3	
		1.5[c]	4.5	6.1	6.1	18.2	
		0.0[d]	33.3	0.0	0.0	33.3	
		5.0[e]	2.1	4.1	3.7	14.7	
Tuesday	5.8	-	3.5	1.7	6.4	17.3	
	9.1		4.5	4.5	6.1	24.2	
	0.0		33.3	0.0	0.0	33.3	
	6.6		4.1	2.5	6.2	19.4	
Wednesday	3.5	5.2	-	6.4	10.4	25.4	
	6.1	6.1		6.1	6.1	24.2	
	0.0	0.0		0.0	33.3	33.3	
	4.1	5.4		6.2	9.5	25.2	
Thursday	4.0	5.2	6.4	-	6.9	22.5	
	4.5	0.0	3.0		3.0	10.6	
	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	
	4.1	3.7	5.4		5.8	19.0	
Friday	6.4	5.8	4.6	4.6	-	21.4	
	4.5	7.6	10.6	0.0		22.7	
	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0	
	5.8	6.2	6.2	3.3		21.5	
Total	19.7	22.6	15.1	16.2	26.6	100	(173)[f]
	24.2	15.2	22.6	16.7	21.3	100	(66)
	0.0	0.0	66.6	0.0	33.3	100	(3)
	20.6	20.3	17.8	16.1	25.2	100	(242)

[a] Totals may not equal the sum of table entries due to rounding.
[b] Data for students with 11-20 absences in the school year.
[c] Data for students with 21-40 absences in the school year.
[d] Data for students with more than 40 absences in the school year.
[e] Total for students with more than 10 absences in the school year.
[f] Numbers in parentheses show the number of students in each level of absenteeism.

TABLE 2:33

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Ordered Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School E8.

Day of Week, Rank 1	Day of Week, Rank 2					
	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Total[a]
Monday	-	8.3[b]	8.3	5.5	4.6	26.9
		6.9[c]	5.2	1.7	6.9	20.7
		11.1[d]	11.1	0.0	0.0	22.2
		8.0[e]	7.4	4.0	5.1	24.6
Tuesday	4.5	-	1.9	1.9	9.3	17.6
	6.9		3.4	10.3	6.9	27.6
	22.2		0.0	11.1	0.0	33.3
	6.3		2.3	5.1	8.0	21.7
Wednesday	3.7	2.8	-	7.4	1.9	15.7
	8.6	1.7		5.2	1.7	17.2
	11.1	0.0		0.0	11.1	22.2
	5.7	2.3		6.3	2.3	16.6
Thursday	1.9	10.2	2.8	-	6.5	21.3
	3.4	3.4	1.7		5.2	13.8
	11.1	0.0	0.0		11.1	22.2
	2.9	7.4	2.3		6.3	18.9
Friday	5.6	1.9	6.5	4.6	-	18.5
	8.6	3.4	3.4	5.2		20.7
	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0
	6.3	2.3	5.1	4.6		18.3
Total	15.1	23.2	19.5	19.4	22.3	100 (108)[f]
	27.5	15.4	13.7	22.4	20.7	100 (58)
	44.4	11.1	11.1	11.1	22.2	100 (9)
	21.2	20.0	17.1	23.1	21.7	100 (175)

[a] Totals may not equal the sum of table entries due to rounding.
[b] Data for students with 11-20 absences in the school year.
[c] Data for students with 21-40 absences in the school year.
[d] Data for students with more than 40 absences in the school year.
[e] Total for students with more than 10 absences in the school year.
[f] Numbers in parentheses show the number of students in each level of absenteeism.

TABLE 2:34

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Ordered Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School A1.

Day of Week, Rank 1	Day of Week, Rank 2					
	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Total[a]
Monday	-	3.8[b]	6.0	5.1	6.4	21.4
		2.2[c]	6.6	2.2	3.3	14.3
		12.5[d]	12.5	12.5	12.5	50.0
		3.6[e]	6.3	4.5	5.7	20.1
Tuesday	5.1	-	3.0	3.4	6.8	18.4
	5.5		5.5	1.1	5.5	17.6
	0.0		0.0	0.0	12.5	12.5
	5.1		3.6	2.7	6.6	18.0
Wednesday	4.7	4.7	-	6.0	6.8	22.2
	5.5	4.4		5.5	4.4	19.8
	0.0	0.0		0.0	12.5	12.5
	4.8	4.5		5.7	6.3	21.3
Thursday	5.1	3.8	3.8	-	5.6	18.4
	3.3	11.0	6.6		2.2	23.1
	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0
	4.5	5.7	4.5		4.5	19.2
Friday	3.8	6.0	4.3	5.6	-	19.7
	3.3	8.8	5.5	7.7		25.3
	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0		25.0
	3.6	6.6	4.5	6.6		21.3
Total	18.7	18.3	17.1	20.1	25.6	100 (234)[f]
	17.6	26.4	24.2	16.5	15.4	100 (91)
	0.0	12.5	12.5	37.5	37.5	100 (8)
	18.0	20.4	18.9	19.5	23.1	100 (333)

[a] Totals may not equal the sum of table entries due to rounding.
[b] Data for students with 11-20 absences in the school year.
[c] Data for students with 21-40 absences in the school year.
[d] Data for students with more than 40 absences in the school year.
[e] Total for students with more than 10 absences in the school year.
[f] Numbers in parentheses show the number of students in each level of absenteeism.

TABLE 2:35

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Ordered Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School A2.

Day of Week, Rank 1	Day of Week, Rank 2						
	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Total[a]	
Monday	-	4.0[b]	6.2	5.8	5.3	21.2	
		7.7[c]	1.9	5.8	1.9	17.3	
		8.3[d]	8.3	8.3	8.3	33.3	
		4.8[e]	5.5	5.9	4.8	21.0	
Tuesday	6.2	-	3.5	6.2	1.8	17.7	
	7.7		3.8	3.8	5.8	21.2	
	8.3		0.0	0.0	0.0	8.3	
	6.6		3.4	5.5	2.4	17.9	
Wednesday	5.8	3.1	-	5.8	5.8	20.4	
	5.8	3.8		13.5	9.6	32.7	
	8.3	0.0		0.0	0.0	8.3	
	5.9	3.1		6.9	6.2	22.1	
Thursday	6.6	5.8	5.8	-	2.2	20.4	
	1.9	0.0	7.7		0.0	9.6	
	0.0	0.0	16.7		8.3	25.0	
	5.5	4.5	6.6		2.1	18.6	
Friday	4.9	8.0	4.4	3.1	-	20.4	
	7.7	5.8	1.9	3.8		19.2	
	0.0	16.7	8.3	0.0		25.0	
	5.2	7.9	4.1	3.1		20.3	
Total	23.5	20.9	19.9	20.9	15.1	100	(226)[f]
	23.1	17.3	15.3	26.9	17.3	100	(52)
	16.6	25.0	33.3	8.3	16.6	100	(12)
	23.2	20.3	19.6	21.4	15.5	100	(290)

[a] Totals may not equal the sum of table entries due to rounding.
[b] Data for students with 11-20 absences in the school year.
[c] Data for students with 21-40 absences in the school year.
[d] Data for students with more than 40 absences in the school year.
[e] Total for students with more than 10 absences in the school year.
[f] Numbers in parentheses show the number of students in each level of absenteeism.

TABLE 2:36

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Ordered Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School A3.

Day of Week, Rank 1	Day of Week, Rank 2					
	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Total[a]
Monday	-	4.0[b]	4.6	4.8	4.4	17.8
		4.8[c]	4.8	3.8	3.8	17.3
		8.3[d]	0.0	16.7	0.0	25.0
		4.2[e]	4.6	4.9	4.2	17.9
Tuesday	6.6	-	3.7	5.1	5.5	20.9
	2.9		2.9	6.7	6.7	19.2
	8.3		0.0	8.3	0.0	16.7
	6.0		3.5	5.4	5.6	20.5
Wednesday	4.4	4.8	-	6.2	5.1	20.5
	9.6	3.8		1.0	2.9	17.3
	8.3	8.3		0 0	0.0	16.7
	5.4	4.7		5.1	4.6	19.8
Thursday	5.7	6.8	4.6	-	4.5	21.8
	4.8	7.7	1.9		6.7	21.2
	0.0	8.3	16.7		8.3	33.3
	5.4	7.0	4.4		5.1	21.9
Friday	5.5	6.2	3.3	4.0	-	18.9
	5.8	4.8	7.7	6.7		25.0
	0.0	0.0	8.3	0.0		8.3
	5.4	5.8	4.2	4.4		19.8
Total	22.2	21.8	16.2	20.1	19.5	100 (454)[f]
	23.1	21.8	17.3	18.2	20.1	100 (104)
	16.6	24.9	25.0	25.0	8.3	100 (12)
	22.2	21.7	16.7	19.8	19.1	100 (570)

[a] Totals may not equal the sum of table entries due to rounding.
[b] Data for students with 11-20 absences in the school year.
[c] Data for students with 21-40 absences in the school year.
[d] Data for students with more than 40 absences in the school year.
[e] Total for students with more than 10 absences in the school year.
[f] Numbers in parentheses show the number of students in each level of absenteeism.

TABLE 2:37

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Ordered Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School Cl.

Day of Week, Rank 1	Day of Week, Rank 2					
	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Total[a]
Monday	-	4.3[b]	4.8	5.8	4.3	19.3
		6.9[c]	3.1	3.8	4.2	18.0
		5.3[d]	6.4	4.3	1.1	17.0
		5.3[e]	4.4	4.9	3.9	18.6
Tuesday	4.6	-	5.3	5.5	4.8	20.2
	6.1		5.7	5.0	3.4	20.3
	8.5		5.3	6.4	6.4	26.6
	5.6		5.5	5.5	4.5	21.0
Wednesday	5.1	6.5	-	5.5	3.9	21.0
	4.6	5.4		4.6	4.2	18.8
	1.1	7.4		3.2	5.3	17.0
	4.4	6.2		4.9	4.2	19.7
Thursday	4.3	7.0	3.6	-	5.5	20.5
	7.3	5.4	5.0		5.7	23.4
	3.2	6.4	3.2		6.4	19.1
	5.2	6.4	4.0		5.7	21.3
Friday	4.1	4.6	5.3	5.1	-	19.0
	5.7	6.5	2.7	4.6		19.5
	5.3	6.4	5.3	3.2		20.2
	4.8	5.5	4.4	4.7		19.4
Total	18.1	22.4	19.0	21.9	18.5	100 (415)[f]
	23.7	24.2	16.5	18.0	17.5	100 (261)
	18.1	25.5	19.4	17.1	19.2	100 (94)
	20.0	23.4	18.3	20.0	18.3	100 (770)

[a] Totals may not equal the sum of table entries due to rounding.
[b] Data for students with 11-20 absences in the school year.
[c] Data for students with 21-40 absences in the school year.
[d] Data for students with more than 40 absences in the school year.
[e] Total for students with more than 10 absences in the school year.
[f] Numbers in parentheses show the number of students in each level of absenteeism.

TABLE 2:38

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Ordered Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School C2.

Day of Week, Rank 1	Day of Week, Rank 2					
	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Total[a]
Monday	-	7.1[b]	3.3	4.4	5.1	19.9
		5.5[c]	5.5	3.8	3.8	18.6
		0.0[d]	3.3	10.0	0.0	13.3
		6.4[e]	3.8	4.5	4.6	19.3
Tuesday	4.4	-	3.3	3.3	5.7	16.6
	3.8		4.9	5.5	6.0	20.2
	6.7		6.7	0.0	13.3	26.7
	4.3		3.8	3.7	6.0	17.9
Wednesday	6.2	5.5	-	6.4	4.9	23.0
	3.3	3.8		2.2	6.0	15.3
	3.3	13.3		6.7	3.3	26.7
	5.4	5.4		5.4	5.1	21.3
Thursday	5.3	6.4	4.7	-	4.9	21.4
	6.6	7.7	8.2		4.9	27.3
	0.7	3.3	0.0		0.0	10.0
	5.7	6.6	5.4		4.7	22.3
Friday	5.5	4.4	4.6	4.7	-	19.2
	3.3	5.5	4.4	5.5		18.6
	6.7	3.3	10.0	3.3		23.3
	5.0	4.6	4.7	4.9		19.2
Total	21.4	23.4	15.9	18.8	20.6	100 (548)[f]
	17.0	22.5	23.0	14.8	20.7	100 (183)
	23.4	19.9	20.0	20.0	16.7	100 (30)
	20.4	23.0	17.7	18.5	20.4	100 (761)

[a] Totals may not equal the sum of table entries due to rounding.
[b] Data for students with 11-20 absences in the school year.
[c] Data for students with 21-40 absences in the school year.
[d] Data for students with more than 40 absences in the school year.
[e] Total for students with more than 10 absences in the school year.
[f] Numbers in parentheses show the number of students in each level of absenteeism.

TABLE 2:39

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Ordered Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School C3.

Day of Week, Rank 1	Day of Week, Rank 2					
	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Total[a]
Monday	-	5.9[b]	4.4	5.5	4.8	20.5
		6.4[c]	3.9	4.9	3.2	18.4
		2.8[d]	5.7	6.4	5.0	19.9
		5.6[e]	4.4	5.4	4.3	19.8
Tuesday	5.5	-	7.1	4.5	6.7	23.9
	5.7		8.1	4.2	4.6	22.6
	8.5		5.0	4.3	5.7	23.4
	6.0		7.1	4.4	5.9	23.4
Wednesday	4.6	4.4	-	4.5	3.6	17.2
	6.0	5.0		5.3	5.7	23.0
	7.1	6.4		5.7	3.5	22.7
	5.4	5.2		5.0	4.2	19.9
Thursday	5.0	3.8	4.0	-	5.7	18.5
	3.5	7.1	6.7		3.2	20.5
	6.4	7.1	2.8		2.8	19.1
	4.6	5.3	4.7		4.4	19.2
Friday	4.5	5.3	5.0	4.8	-	19.7
	3.5	2.8	3.9	5.3		15.5
	4.3	4.3	5.0	1.4		14.9
	4.2	4.3	4.7	4.4		17.7
Total	19.6	19.4	20.5	19.3	18.8	100 (476)[f]
	18.7	21.3	22.6	19.7	16.7	100 (283)
	26.3	20.6	18.5	17.8	17.0	100 (141)
	20.2	20.4	20.9	19.2	18.8	100 (900)

[a] Totals may not equal the sum of table entries due to rounding.
[b] Data for students with 11-20 absences in the school year.
[c] Data for students with 21-40 absences in the school year.
[d] Data for students with more than 40 absences in the school year.
[e] Total for students with more than 10 absences in the school year.
[f] Numbers in parentheses show the number of students in each level of absenteeism.

TABLE 2:40

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Ordered Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School C4.

Day of Week, Rank 1	Day of Week, Rank 2					
	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Total[a]
Monday	-	4.2[b]	6.8	6.8	3.0	20.8
		5.7[c]	2.3	4.6	3.4	16.1
		8.3[d]	0.0	0.0	8.3	16.7
		4.7[e]	5.5	6.1	3.3	19.6
Tuesday	3.8	-	5.3	6.1	3.8	18.9
	6.9		2.3	6.9	6.9	23.0
	0.0		8.3	0.0	16.7	25.0
	4.4		4.7	6.1	5.0	20.1
Wednesday	7.2	5.3	-	3.8	5.7	22.0
	3.4	2.3		6.9	5.7	18.4
	0.0	0.0		8.3	8.3	16.7
	6.1	4.4		4.7	5.8	20.9
Thursday	3.4	6.4	3.4	-	4.9	18.2
	10.3	2.3	6.9		3.4	23.0
	25.0	0.0	0.0		0.0	25.0
	5.8	5.2	4.1		4.4	19.6
Friday	3.8	4.5	6.4	5.3	-	20.1
	2.3	6.9	4.6	5.7		19.5
	8.3	8.3	0.0	0.0		16.7
	3.6	5.2	5.8	5.2		19.8
Total	18.2	20.4	21.9	22.0	17.4	100 (264)[f]
	22.9	17.2	16.1	24.1	19.4	100 (87)
	33.3	16.6	8.3	8.3	33.3	100 (12)
	19.9	19.5	20.1	22.1	18.5	100 (363)

[a] Totals may not equal the sum of table entries due to rounding.
[b] Data for students with 11-20 absences in the school year.
[c] Data for students with 21-40 absences in the school year.
[d] Data for students with more than 40 absences in the school year.
[e] Total for students with more than 10 absences in the school year.
[f] Numbers in parentheses show the number of students in each level of absenteeism.

TABLE 2:41

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Ordered Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School C5.

Day of Week, Rank 1	Day of Week, Rank 2					
	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Total[a]
Monday	-	5.3[b]	5.6	7.5	5.0	23.5
		3.9[c]	5.4	5.4	4.4	19.2
		2.3[d]	8.0	4.5	5.7	20.5
		4.4[e]	5.9	6.5	4.9	21.7
Tuesday	3.8	-	5.3	4.4	5.9	19.4
	6.4		4.4	7.4	4.9	23.2
	5.7		6.8	5.7	5.7	23.9
	4.9		5.2	5.5	5.5	21.2
Wednesday	2.9	5.9	-	5.3	6.2	20.2
	4.9	7.4		3.9	4.9	21.2
	5.7	4.5		3.4	5.7	19.3
	4.0	6.2		4.6	5.7	20.4
Thursday	5.0	5.6	5.6	-	3.8	19.9
	6.9	3.4	3.4		4.4	18.2
	1.1	5.7	5.7		5.7	18.2
	5.1	4.9	4.9		4.3	19.1
Friday	3.5	5.0	5.6	2.9	-	17.0
	4.4	4.9	3.9	4.0		18.2
	9.1	3.4	4.5	1.1		18.2
	4.6	4.7	4.9	3.3		17.6
Total	15.2	21.8	22.1	20.1	20.8	100 (341)[f]
	22.6	19.6	17.1	20.7	18.6	100 (203)
	21.6	15.9	25.0	14.7	22.8	100 (88)
	18.6	20.2	20.9	19.9	20.4	100 (632)

[a] Totals may not equal the sum of table entries due to rounding.
[b] Data for students with 11-20 absences in the school year.
[c] Data for students with 21-40 absences in the school year.
[d] Data for students with more than 40 absences in the school year.
[e] Total for students with more than 10 absences in the school year.
[f] Numbers in parentheses show the number of students in each level of absenteeism.

TABLE 2:42

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Ordered Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School C6.

Day of Week, Rank 1	Day of Week, Rank 2					
	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Total[a]
Monday	-	3.6[b]	3.6	6.7	8.3	22.2
		3.4[c]	6.9	2.8	2.8	15.9
		7.1[d]	14.3	3.6	7.1	32.1
		3.8[e]	5.4	5.2	6.4	20.7
Tuesday	6.3	-	4.8	4.8	5.2	21.0
	8.3		6.2	7.6	5.5	27.6
	14.3		0.0	0.0	7.1	21.4
	7.5		4.9	5.4	5.4	23.3
Wednesday	4.0	4.8	-	4.4	3.6	16.7
	2.8	4.1		6.2	5.5	18.6
	3.6	7.1		3.6	0.0	14.3
	3.5	4.7		4.9	4.0	17.2
Thursday	6.7	2.0	5.2	-	7.9	21.8
	3.4	2.1	4.8		4.1	14.5
	3.6	0.0	3.6		10.7	17.9
	5.4	1.9	4.9		6.8	19.1
Friday	4.4	4.4	6.3	3.2	-	18.3
	7.6	6.2	4.8	4.8		23.4
	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6		14.3
	5.4	4.9	5.6	3.8		19.8
Total	21.4	14.8	19.9	19.1	25.0	100 (252)[f]
	22.1	15.8	22.7	21.4	17.9	100 (145)
	25.1	17.8	21.5	10.8	24.9	100 (28)
	21.8	15.3	20.8	19.3	22.6	100 (425)

[a] Totals may not equal the sum of table entries due to rounding.
[b] Data for students with 11-20 absences in the school year.
[c] Data for students with 21-40 absences in the school year.
[d] Data for students with more than 40 absences in the school year.
[e] Total for students with more than 10 absences in the school year.
[f] Numbers in parentheses show the number of students in each level of absenteeism.

TABLE 2:43

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Ordered Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School C7.

Day of Week, Rank 1	Day of Week, Rank 2					
	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Total[a]
Monday	-	6.0[b]	6.9	4.1	4.6	21.6
		4.3[c]	6.0	3.4	5.2	19.0
		3.4[d]	13.8	3.4	0.0	20.7
		5.2[e]	7.2	3.9	4.4	20.7
Tuesday	6.0	-	5.0	6.4	2.3	19.7
	7.8		9.5	6.9	3.4	27.6
	3.4		17.2	0.0	0.0	20.7
	6.3		7.4	6.1	2.5	22.3
Wednesday	4.1	3.2	-	5.0	4.1	16.5
	2.6	6.0		7.8	0.0	16.9
	0.0	0.0		10.3	13.8	24.1
	3.3	3.9		6.3	3.6	17.1
Thursday	5.0	5.5	4.1	-	7.3	22.0
	4.3	5.2	3.4		4.3	17.2
	3.4	3.4	6.9		3.4	17.2
	4.7	5.2	4.1		6.1	20.1
Friday	4.6	4.1	5.5	6.0	-	20.2
	3.4	3.4	3.4	9.5		19.8
	0.0	0.0	3.4	13.8		17.2
	3.9	3.6	4.7	7.7		19.8
Total	19.7	18.8	21.5	21.5	18.3	100 (218)[f]
	18.1	18.9	22.3	27.6	12.9	100 (116)
	6.8	6.8	41.3	27.5	17.1	100 (29)
	18.2	17.9	23.4	24.0	16.6	100 (363)

[a] Totals may not equal the sum of table entries due to rounding.
[b] Data for students with 11-20 absences in the school year.
[c] Data for students with 21-40 absences in the school year.
[d] Data for students with more than 40 absences in the school year.
[e] Total for students with more than 10 absences in the school year.
[f] Numbers in parentheses show the number of students in each level of absenteeism.

TABLE 2:44

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Ordered Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School C8.

Day of Week, Rank 1	Day of Week, Rank 2					
	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Total[a]
Monday	-	9.1[b]	4.5	2.3	4.5	20.5
		0.0[c]	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		0.0[d]	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		9.1[e]	4.5	2.3	4.5	20.5
Tuesday	2.3	-	2.3	2.3	0.0	6.8
	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2.3		2.3	2.3	0.0	6.8
Wednesday	6.8	2.3	-	9.1	6.8	25.0
	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0
	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0
	6.8	2.3		9.1	6.8	25.0
Thursday	4.5	4.5	6.8	-	6.8	22.7
	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0
	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0
	4.5	4.5	6.8		6.8	22.7
Friday	13.6	6.8	4.5	0.0	-	25.0
	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0
	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0
	13.6	6.8	4.5	0.0		25.0
Total	27.2	22.7	18.1	13.7	18.1	100 (44)[f]
	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100 (0)
	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100 (0)
	27.2	22.7	18.1	13.7	18.1	100 (44)

[a] Totals may not equal the sum of table entries due to rounding.
[b] Data for students with 11-20 absences in the school year.
[c] Data for students with 21-40 absences in the school year.
[d] Data for students with more than 40 absences in the school year.
[e] Total for students with more than 10 absences in the school year.
[f] Numbers in parentheses show the number of students in each level of absenteeism.

TABLE 2:45

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Ordered Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School C9.

Day of Week, Rank 1	Day of Week, Rank 2					
	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Total[a]
Monday	-	5.5[b]	6.5	4.5	5.5	21.9
		8.5[c]	2.2	1.8	5.8	18.3
		7.8[d]	1.9	2.9	5.8	18.4
		6.7[e]	4.5	3.4	5.6	20.3
Tuesday	4.7	-	3.7	5.0	5.0	18.4
	4.9		6.3	4.9	4.9	21.0
	8.7		5.8	8.7	9.7	33.0
	5.3		4.8	5.5	5.6	21.3
Wednesday	4.2	5.5	-	5.0	6.2	20.9
	6.3	5.8		5.4	6.3	23.7
	3.9	3.9		1.9	3.9	13.6
	4.8	5.3		4.7	5.9	20.7
Thursday	6.0	5.0	4.7	-	6.0	21.6
	5.8	3.1	4.9		4.5	18.3
	1.9	7.8	2.9		3.9	16.5
	5.3	4.8	4.5		5.2	19.9
Friday	4.7	4.0	3.2	5.2	-	17.2
	4.0	4.9	4.0	5.8		18.8
	7.8	3.9	4.9	1.9		18.4
	4.9	4.3	3.7	4.9		17.8
Total	19.6	20.0	18.1	19.7	22.7	100 (402)[f]
	21.0	22.3	17.9	17.9	21.5	100 (224)
	22.3	23.4	15.5	15.4	23.3	100 (103)
	20.3	21.1	17.5	18.5	22.3	100 (729)

[a] Totals may not equal the sum of table entries due to rounding.
[b] Data for students with 11-20 absences in the school year.
[c] Data for students with 21-40 absences in the school year.
[d] Data for students with more than 40 absences in the school year.
[e] Total for students with more than 10 absences in the school year.
[f] Numbers in parentheses show the number of students in each level of absenteeism.

TABLE 2:46

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Ordered Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School C10.

Day of Week, Rank 1	Day of Week, Rank 2					
	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Total[a]
Monday	-	5.8[b]	3.8	2.5	3.2	15.4
		2.9[c]	10.1	2.9	7.2	23.2
		8.3[d]	12.5	8.3	8.3	37.5
		5.2[e]	6.4	3.2	4.8	19.2
Tuesday	5.3	-	1.9	3.8	5.1	16.7
	7.2		4.3	2.9	4.3	18.8
	0.0		4.2	0.0	4.2	8.3
	5.6		2.8	3.2	4.8	16.5
Wednesday	4.5	5.1	-	5.8	2.6	17.9
	7.2	4.3		1.4	5.8	18.8
	4.2	4.2		8.3	4.2	20.8
	5.2	4.8		4.8	3.6	18.5
Thursday	5.8	8.3	6.4	-	6.4	26.9
	0.0	5.8	8.7		4.3	18.8
	8.3	8.3	4.2		0.0	20.8
	4.4	7.6	6.8		5.2	24.1
Friday	5.8	5.8	6.4	5.1	-	23.1
	7.2	4.3	5.8	2.9		20.3
	4.2	0.0	8.3	0.0		12.5
	6.0	4.8	6.4	4.0		21.3
Total	21.4	25.0	18.5	17.2	17.3	100(156)[f]
	21.6	17.3	28.9	10.1	21.6	100(69)
	16.7	20.8	29.2	16.6	16.7	100(24)
	21.2	22.4	22.4	15.2	18.4	100(249)

[a] Totals may not equal the sum of table entries due to rounding.
[b] Data for students with 11-20 absences in the school year.
[c] Data for students with 21-40 absences in the school year.
[d] Data for students with more than 40 absences in the school year.
[e] Total for students with more than 10 absences in the school year.
[f] Numbers in parentheses show the number of students in each level of absenteeism.

TABLE 2:47

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Ordered Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School VI.

Day of Week, Rank 1	Day of Week, Rank 2					
	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Total[a]
Monday	-	3.0[b]	6.0	7.3	4.3	20.5
		2.8[c]	5.1	4.5	4.0	16.4
		5.0[d]	2.0	7.0	3.0	17.0
		3.3[e]	4.9	6.3	3.9	18.4
Tuesday	3.4	-	4.7	5.1	4.3	17.5
	3.4		5.1	4.0	6.8	19.2
	6.0		4.0	2.0	2.0	14.0
	3.9		4.7	4.1	4.7	17.4
Wednesday	7.3	6.8	-	3.8	3.8	21.8
	6.8	5.6		7.3	4.0	23.7
	7.0	4.0		4.0	5.0	20.0
	7.0	5.9		5.1	4.1	22.1
Thursday	6.8	7.3	5.6	-	6.0	25.6
	4.5	6.8	1.1		5.6	18.1
	3.0	8.0	6.0		9.0	26.0
	5.3	7.2	4.1		6.5	23.1
Friday	4.7	1.3	4.7	3.8	-	14.5
	5.1	5.1	5.1	7.3		22.6
	7.0	5.0	4.0	7.0		23.0
	5.3	3.3	4.7	5.7		19.0
Total	22.2	18.4	21.0	20.0	18.4	100 (234)[f]
	19.8	20.3	16.4	23.1	20.4	100 (177)
	23.0	22.0	16.0	20.0	19.0	100 (100)
	21.5	19.7	18.4	21.2	19.2	100 (511)

[a] Totals may not equal the sum of table entries due to rounding.
[b] Data for students with 11-20 absences in the school year.
[c] Data for students with 21-40 absences in the school year.
[d] Data for students with more than 40 absences in the school year.
[e] Total for students with more than 10 absences in the school year.
[f] Numbers in parentheses show the number of students in each level of absenteeism.

TABLE 2:48

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Ordered Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School V2.

Day of Week, Rank 1	Day of Week, Rank 2					
	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Total[a]
Monday	-	2.6[b]	4.4	8.8	3.5	19.3
		4.7[c]	3.1	4.7	12.5	25.0
		6.3[d]	12.5	12.5	0.0	31.3
		3.6[e]	4.6	7.7	6.2	22.2
Tuesday	6.1	-	4.4	4.4	7.0	21.9
	7.8		6.3	1.6	7.8	23.4
	0.0		6.3	0.0	6.3	12.5
	6.2		5.2	3.1	7.2	21.6
Wednesday	8.8	3.5	-	5.3	3.5	21.1
	9.4	3.1		3.1	3.1	18.8
	18.8	0.0		0.0	6.3	25.0
	9.8	3.1		4.4	3.6	20.6
Thursday	2.6	6.1	6.1	-	8.8	23.7
	6.3	3.1	3.1		0.0	12.5
	0.0	6.3	0.0		6.3	12.5
	3.6	5.2	4.6		5.7	19.1
Friday	0.9	5.3	4.4	3.5	-	14.0
	4.7	4.7	4.7	6.3		20.3
	6.3	0.0	12.5	0.0		18.8
	2.6	4.6	5.2	4.1		16.5
Total	18.4	17.5	19.3	22.0	22.8	100 (114)[f]
	28.2	15.6	17.2	15.7	23.4	100 (64)
	25.1	12.6	31.3	12.5	18.9	100 (16)
	22.2	16.5	19.6	19.3	22.7	100 (194)

[a] Totals may not equal the sum of table entries due to rounding.
[b] Data for students with 11-20 absences in the school year.
[c] Data for students with 21-40 absences in the school year.
[d] Data for students with more than 40 absences in the school year.
[e] Total for students with more than 10 absences in the school year.
[f] Numbers in parentheses show the number of students in each level of absenteeism.

TABLE 2:49

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students: Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Ordered Pairs of Days of the Week on Which Students Were Most Often Absent, by Level of Absenteeism, for School V3.

Day of Week, Rank 1	Day of Week, Rank 2					
	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Total[a]
Monday	-	5.3[b]	1.8	5.3	3.6	16.0
		5.9[c]	5.9	5.9	4.0	21.8
		9.4[d]	3.1	0.0	0.0	12.5
		6.0[e]	3.3	5.0	3.3	17.5
Tuesday	6.5	-	4.7	5.3	5.3	21.9
	5.0		5.0	5.0	3.0	17.8
	3.1		12.5	3.1	6.3	25.0
	5.6		5.6	5.0	4.6	20.9
Wednesday	7.7	5.3	-	8.9	4.1	26.0
	1.0	7.9		7.9	6.9	23.8
	9.4	3.1		3.1	6.3	21.9
	5.6	6.0		7.9	5.3	24.8
Thursday	3.5	3.6	4.1	-	9.5	20.7
	2.0	6.9	5.9		8.9	23.8
	0.0	3.1	15.6		9.4	28.1
	2.6	4.6	6.0		9.3	22.5
Friday	4.1	7.1	1.2	3.0	-	15.4
	4.0	2.0	3.0	4.0		12.9
	9.4	0.0	3.1	0.0		12.5
	4.6	4.6	2.0	3.0		14.2
Total	21.8	21.3	11.8	22.5	22.5	100 (169)[f]
	12.0	22.7	19.8	22.8	22.8	100 (101)
	21.9	15.6	34.3	6.2	22.0	100 (32)
	18.5	21.2	16.9	20.9	22.5	100 (302)

[a] Totals may not equal the sum of table entries due to rounding.
[b] Data for students with 11-20 absences in the school year.
[c] Data for students with 21-40 absences in the school year.
[d] Data for students with more than 40 absences in the school year.
[e] Total for students with more than 10 absences in the school year.
[f] Numbers in parentheses show the number of students in each level of absenteeism.

nesday for students with twenty-one to forty absences in School A2; and Tuesday for students with more than forty absences in School C9.

The second of the two weekly patterns--the ordered pair of days of maximum absenteeism observed for a significant number of students--was considered significant for thirteen of the sixty-seven groups with at least forty students. No such patterns were observed in thirteen of the sample schools. The following patterns were considered significant:

1. Thursday-Friday for students in School E2 with more than ten absences during the school year;
2. Friday-Thursday and Thursday-Monday for students in School E3 with between ten and twenty absences during the school year;
3. Wednesday-Thursday and Thursday-Wednesday for students in School E5 with more than ten absences during the school year;
4. Friday-Monday for students in School E6 with eleven to twenty absences during the school year;
5. Wednesday-Friday for students in School E7 with eleven to twenty absences during the school year;
6. Friday-Wednesday for students in School E7 with twenty-one to forty absences during the school year;
7. Thursday-Tuesday for students in School E8 with eleven to twenty-one absences during the school year;
8. Tuesday-Thursday for students in School E8 with twenty-one to forty absences during the school year;
9. Thursday-Tuesday for students in School A1 with twenty-one to forty absences during the school year;

10. Wednesday-Thursday for students in School A2 with twenty-one to forty absences during the school year;
11. Thursday-Monday for students in School C4 with twenty-one to forty absences during the school year;
12. Monday-Wednesday for students in school C10 with twenty-one to forty absences during the school year; and
13. Monday-Friday for students in School V2 with twenty-one to forty absences during the school year.

111 SUMMARY

Summaries of the findings related to levels of absenteeism and patterns of absenteeism in schools and among students are presented below.

Levels of Absenteeism

The measure of the level of absenteeism, used in this study, was the average of the number of absences per day for the school year, expressed as a percentage of the school enrolment. The data indicate that the level of absenteeism is higher for secondary schools (8.9) than for elementary schools (5.5) and that vocational schools (13.5) rank higher than comprehensive secondary schools (8.4) which rank higher than academic secondary schools (6.0). The maximum and minimum levels of absenteeism detected in the sample schools were 3.5 and 20.1 respectively while the average level for all schools was 7.8. The level of absenteeism was higher for boys than girls in four of the elementary schools; nine of the secondary schools; five of the comprehensive secondary schools; and all three of the vocational secondary schools.

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools

The days on which the weekly maximum number of absences was recorded most frequently over the school year, for all students, which occurred most often in the sample schools were: Friday then Monday, for all schools; Friday and Monday equally for elementary and academic secondary schools; Friday, for comprehensive and vocational secondary schools.

Differences of interest among grade level groupings, on the basis of the day of the week on which the weekly maximum number of absences was most frequently recorded, occurred in fifteen of the twenty-four sample schools--four elementary and eleven secondary schools. Eight of these differences involved changes in the relative frequencies of occurrence of Monday and Friday; changes in a further five schools included Tuesday; while changes in the remaining two schools included Wednesday and Thursday, respectively, together with Friday and, in one instance, Monday.

Differences between patterns before and after Christmas, of the day of the week on which the weekly maximum number of absences was most frequently recorded, were identified for one group in nineteen of the sample schools. In ten of these nineteen schools, differences between patterns were found in at least thirty per cent of of the groups. Six of these ten were elementary schools. However, the nature of these differences was not consistent across groups.

Differences between patterns, of the day of the week on which the maximum number of absences was most frequently recorded, for boys and girls were observed in fourteen of the sample schools but in only seven of these were the differences observed for more than one of the three time periods.

Ordered pairs of the two days of the week, on which most absences were recorded, were considered significant, for at least one group/time-period combination, in twenty of the sample schools but in only one school did significant pairs occur for at least thirty per cent of the combinations included in the analysis.

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students

The first of the two weekly patterns of absenteeism--the day of the week which was the day of maximum absenteeism for a significant proportion of students--was considered significant for only three of the sixty-seven groups containing at least forty students.

The second of the two weekly patterns of absenteeism among students--the ordered pair of days of maximum absenteeism observed for a significant proportion of students--was considered significant for thirteen of the sixty-seven groups containing at least forty students.

3 School Attendance and Dropouts

One of the tasks of the study was to determine whether a relationship could be established between poor attendance and dropping out of school. Presented in this chapter are the findings of a survey undertaken in the fifteen secondary schools included in the representative sample of schools from across the province.

Previous research studies indicate that absenteeism is only one of the major factors affecting potential dropouts.[1] Other factors are: regression in scholarship from elementary school to junior and senior high school, low reading scores, frequency of grade or subject failure, regression in attendance from elementary school to high school, frequent transfers from one school to another, 'lack of belonging', lack of interest in school work.

The survey was restricted to the secondary schools only, because drop-outs do not present a major problem at the elementary level. For purposes of this study, a drop-out was defined as any student registered in secondary school who leaves prior to graduation or the normal termination point in his course of studies, or has been absent during the school year for forty consecutive school days without a viable reason being provided.

The survey included all students who were registered in the fifteen secondary schools during the school year 1976-77, and who were registered in the same school at the beginning of the school year 1977-78. These students were divided into two groups: those students who became dropouts during the 1977-78 school year prior to the time that the data were gathered in the schools; and those students 'other students' who had not become dropouts prior to the time the data were

TABLE 3:1

Means and Standard Deviations of the Number of Absences During the 1976-77 School Year for Students Who Dropped Out During the 1977-78 School Year and Other Students

	Descriptive Statistics for:					
	Dropouts			Other Students		
School Code[a]	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N
A1	19.0	12.37	22	10.66	8.45	772
A2	17.83	25.34	13	9.42	8.44	820
A3	11.10	8.50	153	10.26	8.15	1203
C1	25.80	20.94	102	17.65	13.71	1049
C2	16.89	12.12	54	10.96	10.02	1805
C3	31.24	23.89	101	18.09	15.92	1308
C4[b]	12.33	9.12	207	9.61	8.71	748
C5	35.62	23.53	22	15.98	14.23	1034
C6	18.56	12.04	87	12.65	10.73	788
C7	26.07	20.65	28	14.05	11.78	658
C8[c]	4.50	3.51	5	6.36	5.22	201
C9	24.69	16.52	84	16.60	15.69	1165
C10	22.69	21.63	30	12.13	12.02	556
V1	27.16	19.72	204	18.84	19.64	586
V2	17.58	24.33	25	15.43	12.96	329
V3	26.63	12.41	17	16.50	13.53	461

a In the School Code 'A' indicates an Academic School, 'C' indicates a Comprehensive School, and 'V' indicates a Vocational School.

b C4: 76-77 data not available. Data is for 77-78.

c C8: This is the only school where the Mean and Standard deviation for dropouts is less than mean and standard deviation for 'other students'. It is suggested that this Mean and Standard deviation is not reliable due to the small number of dropouts in that school.

gathered during May and June, 1978.

Attendance registers for the school year 1976-77 were examined, and the number of absences during that year was recorded for each student included in the survey. The mean number of absences and the standard deviation were calculated for the group of students who became dropouts, and compared with similar statistics for the group of other students who did not become dropouts. The means and standard deviations, by school, are presented in Table 3.1.

It will be noted that at fourteen out of fifteen schools, the mean number of absences for the dropout group was higher than the mean number of absences for the group of other students. In the case of the single school where this pattern did not hold, the number of students in the dropout group was so small that the data may be unreliable.

Given the very strong pattern that appears in the means, it is very tempting indeed to jump to the conclusion that on the average, dropouts were absent more than other students. However, when the standard deviations are taken into account, the results are not nearly so clear-cut.

In all but one school (where the data for dropouts may be unreliable) the standard deviation for the dropout group was greater than the standard deviation for the group of other students; and in every case the standard deviations of the two groups of students may be seen to overlap quite considerably.

The case of the school identified in Table 3:1 by school code CI may be cited as an example. The mean number of absences for the dropout group was 25.80, but the standard deviation was 20.94. This means that for the approximately two-thirds of the group who

fall within the first standard deviation, the number of absences ranged from approximately five days to approximately forty-seven days.

On the other hand, the mean number of absences for the group of other students was 17.65, but the standard deviation was 13.71. This means that for the two-thirds of this group who fall within the first standard deviation, the number of absences ranged from approximately four days to approximately thirty-one days.

In other words, some of the dropouts were absent less than the mean of the non-dropouts, and some of the non-dropouts were absent more than the mean of the dropouts. The overlap between the groups is so great that one must be very hesitant, indeed, to draw any conclusion from these data with respect to poor attendance being related to dropping out of school.

4 The Good and Poor Attender in Secondary Schools

1 INTRODUCTION

Presented in this chapter are the findings of the survey undertaken in 15 secondary schools included in the representative sample. The survey instrument employed contains 67 items which provided data on, among other things: the socio-economic status of the students responding to the questionnaire; their attitudes towards school work; truancy and class skipping; career aspirations; and their perception of the teachers' attention to and concern for attendance. A total of 714 students responded to the questionnaire, of which 403 were considered to be good attenders, and 311 were classified as poor attenders.

In addition to this survey, all of the teachers in the schools were asked to complete a similar questionnaire. Of the 821 teachers requested to participate in the study, 64.2 per cent or 527 returned completed questionnaires. The 24 items in this questionnaire were designed to assess the teachers' perceptions on matters such as students' attitudes to school and school work as well as an assessment of present procedures to record and limit class skipping and absenteeism.

The major purpose in the analysis of this data was to determine whether any distinguishing characteristics between poor and good attenders could be identified. Further to this analysis, the congruence of perceptions of teachers and both types of attenders is examined. The findings from the survey and its analysis are presented in four parts: (1) some characteristics of poor attenders; (2) family setting of good and poor attenders; (3) school satisfaction; (4) perceptions

regarding absenteeism and class-skipping.

II SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF POOR ATTENDERS

Before comparing the perceptions of good and poor attenders a brief description of poor attenders is provided. The following description is based upon the responses of 311 poor attenders. This number represents approximately 20 per cent of those students who were absent for the equivalent of 20 or more days in the academic year. It is assumed that this sample is representative of poor attenders and therefore includes a number of students who were absent with legitimate reasons.

Within the sample of poor attenders no one sex predominates. In fact, the number of male and female poor attenders differed by only one. This difference, which was in favour of the female group, is so slight as to be considered insignificant. In contrast, there does appear to be some relationship between age and poor attendance. According to Table 4:1, 16 years is a critical age for absenteeism. Of the poor attenders surveyed, 69.6 per cent were between the ages of 16 and 18.

TABLE 4:1

Percentage Distribution of Poor Attenders by Age

	Age of Students (in years)							
Type of Student	12 or less %	13 %	14 %	15 %	16 %	17 %	18 %	19 or more %
Poor Attenders	0.6	0.0	4.8	15.4	20.3	27.0	22.2	9.6

The distribution of poor attenders according to grade presented in Table 4:2 indicates that just over 50 per cent of these students are in grades XI and XII. Thus better levels of attendance are experienced both in the lower grades and in grade XIII.

TABLE 4:2

Percentage Distribution of Poor Attenders by Grade

	Grade Level				
	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII
Type of Student	%	%	%	%	%
Poor Attenders	17.2	21.4	25.6	25.2	10.7

In the review of the literature, academic performance is acknowledged as a factor which is related to student attendance. While Table 4:3 indicates that the level of academic performance of poor attenders as indicated by average marks is not as high as for good attenders, nevertheless the academic standing of the sample of poor attenders in this study is not especially low. In fact, 41.1 per cent of these students indicated that their average mark for the previous school year was either an A or a B. Although 13.9 per cent could not recall their average academic performance, only 8.8 per cent indicated a failing grade. In contrast, the percentage of good attenders receiving a grade of A or B in the previous year is 69.9. This difference in the academic performance of good and poor attenders is statistically significant and so it may be inferred that those students with higher grades are more likely to have better attendance records. However, it should be recalled that the majority of poor attenders still receive passing grades.

TABLE 4:3

Percentage Distribution of Good and Poor Attenders by Average Academic Grade in June 1977

Type of Student	Average Academic Grade A %	B %	C %	D %	E %	Don't Know %
Good Attender	22.8	47.1	18.6	1.0	0.5	9.9
Poor Attender	5.2	35.9	36.2	6.5	2.3	13.9

Another dimension of academic achievement is the type of program selected by a student. Table 4:4 indicates the distribution of the sample of good and poor attenders among the basic, general, and advanced programs offered in Ontario high schools. An examination of the cells in the table reveals that the greater percentage of poor attenders, 48.6 per cent, is to be found in the general program. This value is approximately 12 per cent higher than the average frequency. It would seem that absenteeism is a greater problem in advanced and general programs.

TABLE 4:4

Percentage Distribution of Good and Poor Attenders by Program

Type of Student	Type of Program Basic %	General %	Advanced %
Good Attender	18.2	27.7	54.1
Poor Attender	15.4	48.6	36.0

III ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

The effect of environmental and family background on student performance in school has been fairly well documented. The review of the research literature undertaken for this study suggests that such factors can play a part in school attendance. Thus, the purpose of this section of the chapter is to examine any relationships between selected environmental factors and levels of school attendance for Ontario high school students. The variables examined are grouped according to: home background; (2) parent origins; (3) geographic location of home; and (4) aspirations toward formal education and work.

Home Background

Although the home background of students has been employed as an explanatory variable for a range of behaviours in school, there is no one variable that may be used to adequately describe the home. As a consequence, many variables have been employed for this purpose. However, the dimensions considered in this study were limited to: the number of parents in the home; the number of children in the family; the level of education of both father and mother; and the occupation of parents. The findings suggest that the prevailing views are not always relevant to Ontario high schools.

One of the test items asked both types of students to indicate whether they lived with both parents, a single parent, a guardian, or another person. The responses presented in Table 4:5 indicate that the students' home situation is related to their type of attendance. The observed frequency of poor attenders was well below the average frequency for all students who lived with both parents. Poor attenders in the other categories exceeded the average frequencies, especially

in the case of those who lived with the mother only or with some other person. Thus it may be inferred that, all things remaining the same, students from households with both parents tend to be better attenders than students from single-parent households. Within the latter group, students who come from households headed by the mother tend to have a higher incidence of absenteeism than those from households with a single father. The findings suggest that the absence of a father is somewhat more dysfunctional for student attendance.

TABLE 4:5

Percentage Distribution of Good and Poor Attenders by Parents in the Home

	Parents in the Home				
Type of Student	Father Mother %	Father Only %	Mother Only %	Guardian %	Other %
Good attender	87.3	2.7	7.2	1.5	1.2
Poor Attender	71.9	4.5	15.5	2.9	5.2

The students in the survey were also asked to indicate the number of children (including themselves) in their family. The inclusion of this item permitted an examination of the relationship between school attendance and family home. The findings shown in Table 4:6 reveal little difference in the distribution of poor and good attenders according to family home. In fact, 75.1 per cent of poor attenders in the sample come from families with three or more children, which is only 2 per cent more than for the same groups of good attenders.

TABLE 4:6

Percentage Distribution of Good and Poor Attenders

by the Number of Children in the Home

Type of Student	Number of Children in the Home: One %	Two %	Three %	Four %	Five or More %
Good Attender	3.2	23.3	27.8	25.1	20.6
Poor Attender	5.5	19.4	24.3	22.0	28.8

Table 4:7 provides the percentage distribution of good and poor attenders according to the highest level of education received by their parents. In the case of the father's level of education, no wide variance is observed in the distribution of types of attenders.

TABLE 4:7

Percentage Distribution of Good and Poor Attenders

by Parents' Highest Level of Formal Education

Type of Parent	Type of Student	Levels of Formal Education: Elementary %	Secondary %	College %	Don't Know %
Father	Good Attender	18.7	33.7	30.7	17.0
	Poor Attender	22.7	31.7	24.9	20.7
Mother	Good Attender	12.5	43.9	28.2	15.5
	Poor Attender	14.5	48.1	21.6	15.8

The majority of both good and poor attenders come from families in which the father has at least a high school education. The only difference observed with respect to the level of the mother's education is that the proportion of mothers who have received a high school education is higher than for fathers. In contrast, a slightly higher percentage of fathers had received some college or university education. In conclusion, it would appear that the level of education of either parent is not significantly related to their children's attendance.

The occupation of parents is often used as an indicator of the general socio-economic status of the family. The findings of the relationship between parents' occupation and type of attendance are shown in Table 4:8. The results suggest that this factor has little bearing on patterns of attendance. Consequently, the results would suggest that poor attendance is not associated with any particular socio-economic levels but is a problem in all segments of our society.

Parent Origins

The fact that Canada has encouraged emigration from all parts of the world suggests that a wide variety of parental views with respect to education may exist which are reflected in their children's frequency of attendance at school. In order to assess the impact of parent origins on frequency of attendance two items were used: (1) principal language spoken at home; (2) parent's birthplace.

Twenty-one different languages were identified as the principal language spoken at home. However, approximately ninety per cent of students, regardless of type of attendance, indicated

TABLE 4:8

Percentage Distribution of Good and Poor Attenders by

Occupation of Parents or Guardians

Type of Parent	Type of Student	Unskilled Labour %	Semi-Skilled Labour %	Skilled Labour %	Clerical %	Managerial %	Professional %	Self-Employed %	Not-Employed %	Homemaker %	Other %
Father	Good Attender	4.3	11.8	20.4	21.7	3.8	17.2	11.3	3.5	-	6.2
	Poor Attender	2.9	15.6	19.2	21.0	2.5	17.0	12.0	3.3	-	6.5
Mother	Good Attender	-	9.1	0.5	27.9	0.3	10.7	1.6	1.6	46.2	2.1
	Poor Attender	-	6.8	1.0	32.2	1.4	8.1	3.1	0.3	43.7	3.4

that English was the language used in the home. Therefore, it would appear that there is no significant relationship between type of attendance and language spoken at home.

Of those students reporting father's birthplace, 67.0 per cent of the good attenders and 72.8 per cent of the poor attenders indicated Canada as place of origin. Similarly, the mother's of 70.3 per cent of good attenders and 72.7 per cent of poor attenders were born in Canada. The remaining students indicated that the birthplaces for their parents were located in one of more than thirteen countries or regions of the world.

On the whole, no significant differences were observed which suggest any relationship between type of attendance and principal language used or parent's birthplace. One may conclude that parental origin has no bearing on school attendance of Ontario high school students.

An important observation with respect to these measures should be highlighted. Not only do approximately ninety per cent of all the students surveyed indicate English as the chief language spoken but more than eighty per cent of the parents of the students come from Canda or other countries in which English is the major language.

Geographic Location of Home

In order to assess whether attendance is affected by geographic location of the home both good and poor attenders were categorized according to location of residence and mode of travel to school. The data provided in Table 4:9 reveals similar distribution patterns of the two types of students with respect to the location of students' homes.

TABLE 4:9

Percentage Distribution of Good and Poor Attenders by Location of Residence

Type of Student	Location of Residence			
	City %	Town or Village %	Rural %	Farm %
Good Attender	63.5	13.2	14.1	9.2
Poor Attender	61.2	16.2	16.2	6.5
Total	62.5	14.5	15.0	8.0

In contrast, the findings presented in Table 4:10 suggest that the mode of transportation may have some bearing on the attendance. For example, 29.8 per cent of poor attenders travel to school in their own car or by public transit whereas only 18.2 per cent of good attenders use similar means of transportation. Alternatively the proportion of good attenders walking to school is 41.5 per cent whereas only 32.4 per cent of poor attenders walk to school.

TABLE 4:10

Percentage Distribution of Good and Poor Attenders by Most Common Means of Transportation to School

Type of Student	Means of Transportation					
	Walk %	Driven by Parent %	Own Car %	School Bus %	Public Transit %	Other %
Good Attender	41.5	4.0	5.5	31.3	12.7	5.0
Poor Attender	32.4	3.2	12.3	29.5	17.5	5.2
Total	37.6	3.7	8.4	30.5	14.8	5.1

Aspirations towards Formal Education and Work

The desire for some measure of financial independence and future goals may have some bearing on the level of attendance of a student. To test the first statement both types of students were asked to indicate whether or not they held a part-time job of twelve or more hours duration per week. Their responses indicated that 36.6 per cent of poor attenders held a part-time job in contrast to 23.8 per cent of good attenders. These findings are statistically significant.

Future plans of students may be affected by the expectations of their parents; the norms developed within the group of friends; as well as personal ambitions. In order to examine the effect of these factors on levels of attendance, students were asked to indicate the plans that they feel most of their friends intend to follow and their own plans for the future. Table 4:11 provides the responses to these varied choice questions.

When the students were asked to indicate their own future plans some differences emerge according to level of attendance. A high proportion of good attenders (approximately thirty nine per cent) indicated they intended to continue with their formal education up to and including university. Among the poor attenders, 17.7 per cent indicated that their plans included attending university. Thus, the proportion of poor attenders with university oriented plans was less than half of the good attenders with similar expectations. Conversely 28.6 per cent of poor attenders perceived their future in terms of leaving school as soon as possible or obtaining a job as soon as completing high school. The per cent of good attenders with similar plans is 12.0. Little difference is observed in the proportions of

good and poor attenders who showed a preference for colleges of applied arts and technology. It would appear that those students who do not intend to continue their formal education beyond high school level tend to have a higher incidence of absenteeism.

The responses to the request to indicate what they thought were their friend's future plans revealed some differences with their own expectations. For example, both good and poor attenders felt that the expectations of their friends to pursue university education was lower than their own. Thus, only 31.9 per cent of good attenders perceived that their friends intended to go to university and only 15.1 per cent of poor attenders felt that their friends were university bound.

The greatest differences in the respondents' plans and those they perceive of their friends is found in the numbers of students who intend to leave school as soon as possible or find work. The respondents whether good or poor attenders, perceive a greater proportion of their friends leaving high school with no intentions of pursuing any educational plans. Thus, 32.1 per cent of good attenders perceive their friends with no future education plans while 47.5 per cent of poor attenders feel that their friends have such intentions.

It would appear that some significant differences exist between the students' own future plans and the perceived plans of their parents. Consequently, the perceived proportion of parents, whether of poor or good attenders, who would like their children to attend university is higher than that of the respondents preferences. In the case of good attenders, 57.8 per cent of them perceive that their parents would like them to continue with their formal education

TABLE 4:11

Distribution of Good and Poor Attenders by Future Plans

Plans Made	Type of Student	Alternative Future Plans					
		University	College	Apprentice-ship	Work	Leave School	Other/ Undecided
		%	%	%	%	%	%
Respondent	Good Attender	38.8	22.3	7.3	11.0	1.0	19.8
	Poor Attender	17.7	22.8	6.4	22.8	5.8	24.4
Friends	Good Attender	31.9	23.2	2.5	23.4	8.7	10.2
	Poor Attender	15.1	18.3	2.9	34.1	13.5	16.1
Parents	Good Attender	57.8	21.8	5.0	8.8	0.0	5.8
	Poor Attender	44.8	22.9	5.8	18.7	1.0	6.8

at university. The percentage of poor attenders who have similar perceptions is 44.8, which is somewhat lower. On the whole, almost eighty per cent of the good attenders and approximately ninety eight per cent of the poor attenders indicated that their parents would like them to pursue some form of post-secondary education. In contrast, about sixty one per cent of good attenders and forty one per cent of poor attenders indicated a personal preference for post-secondary education in their own plans. Thus, it would appear that the parental aspirations for their children to continue with some form of education is greater than that of the children regardless of level of school attendance. However, significant differences do exist in the expectations of parents of poor and good attenders with respect to their children's future educational plans.

IV SATISFACTION

Although none of the literature surveyed indicated any research linking school absenteeism with school satisfaction, the literature in organizational and social psychology suggests that links may well exist between absenteeism and an individual's motivation and satisfaction with the role he or she is undertaking within a work organization. In view of the latter field of research it is possible a relationship exists between the satisfation and motivation of students in a school and their levels of attendance. To explore such a relationship, the Job Diagnostic Survey developed by Hackman and Oldham[1] was adapted to the school setting. The above survey attempts to measure a number of affective reactions or feelings that a person develops when performing a job, among which are: (1) general satisfaction; (2) meaningfulness of school work; (3) internal work motivation and (4) individual growth strength.

These four measures derived from the Job Diagnostic Survey were considered to have particular relevance in this study of student absenteeism. As a consequence, both the questionnaires for students and teachers included items from which indices could be calculated which reflected the students', or teachers' perceptions of school satisfaction; meaningfulness of school work; internal work motivation and individual growth strength.

The school satisfaction index is an overall measure of the degree to which a student is satisfied with the school he or she attends. The experienced meaningfulness of work indication provides a measure of the importance of school work to the student. Thus, this index is an assessment of the degree to which a student considers the activities and studies undertaken at school as being meaningful, valuable and worthwhile.

If a student feels that the results of his efforts are not important or relevant it is unlikely that he will be motivated to continue with these activities. In fact to be self- motivated, a student should achieve something that is felt to be worthwhile and important and at the same time feel that his or her efforts are worthwhile. The measure, internal work motivation, indicates the degree to which individuals are self-motivated.

The purpose of tapping the strength of a respondent's desire to "grow" in his or her work is to assess how an individual responds to a job. The individual growth need strength index measures the degree to which each student has a strong or weak desire to obtain satisfaction from school work. Individuals with high scores may be expected to respond more positively to school work which focuses upon higher order need satisfaction. Conversely, a student with a low

value on this scale would tend to be one who does not respond well to opportunities for the satisfaction of higher order needs.

This section of the report provides an analysis of the mean values of the above indices calculated for good and poor attenders by sex. For each index, the mean value may range from a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 5. Since the study is descriptive in nature no consideration is given to the statistical significance of the findings. Any significant differences reported are based upon inspection of the tables only.

School Satisfaction

Table 4:12 presents the mean scores and standard deviations of the school satisfaction index for good and poor attenders by sex. The mean scores for both male and female good attenders are higher than the corresponding values for poor attenders. In general, the mean scores of 3.40 and 3.29 suggest that good attenders are moderately satisfied with school in comparison with poor attenders where mean scores of 2.94 and 2.68 indicate they are barely satisfied with school. Within the good attenders, the difference in the means between the sexes is not significant. However, in the case of the poor attenders, the difference in the means is greater.

Poor attenders are less satisfied with school than good attenders, but differences exist between the sexes in each group. Thus, females of both groups are less satisfied than their male counterparts. Consequently, male good attenders have the highest mean score of 3.40 for school satisfaction and female poor attenders have the lowest mean score of 2.68.

TABLE 4:12

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of School Satisfaction Index by Type and Sex of Student

Type of Student	Sex	School Satisfaction Index	
		Mean	Standard Deviation
Good Attender	Male	3.40	0.59
	Female	3.29	0.59
Poor Attender	Male	2.94	0.63
	Female	2.68	0.63

Meaningfulness of School Work

The degree to which the student considers his or her work to be generally meaningful, valuable and worthwhile is reflected in the mean scores and standard deviations presented in Table 4:13. Although the mean values for both sexes of poor attenders are somewhat below the means for good attenders, the range is moderate. Within the respective types of attenders the mean values of this index do not differ significantly for sex since the mean for males is only marginally higher than for females in each group. However, as in the case of school satisfaction the greatest difference in means exists between male good attenders and female poor attenders.

Internal Work Motivation

Table 4:14 presents the mean scores and standard deviations of the internal work motivation index. These scores represent the degree to which both good and poor attenders assess their self-motivation to school work. Once more, the mean values of both sexes of

TABLE 4:13

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of the Meaningfulness of School Work Index by Type and Sex of Student

Type of Student	Sex	Meaningfulness of School Work Index	
		Mean	Standard Deviation
Good Attender	Male	3.37	0.68
	Female	3.35	0.65
Poor Attender	Male	3.10	0.73
	Female	3.06	0.69

good attenders are marginally higher than the corresponding values for poor attenders. Moreover, the range of values for this index of 3.81 to 3.60 suggest that both good and poor attenders perceive themselves as having a fairly high level of internal work motivation.

Within each group, there is little difference in the mean values of the index between the sexes. However, in the case of poor attenders the mean score for females is marginally higher than that for males. Consequently the range of mean scores for this index has a high of 3.81 for male good attenders and a low of 3.60 for male poor attenders.

TABLE 4:14

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of the Internal Work Motivation Index by Type and Sex of Student

Type of Student	Sex	Internal Work Motivation Index	
		Mean	Standard Deviation
Good Attender	Male	3.81	0.54
	Female	3.80	0.50
Poor Attender	Male	3.60	0.56
	Female	3.70	0.48

Individual Growth Need Strength

The degree to which students can satisfy their 'growth' needs through their school work is reflected in this measure. Table 4:15 provides the mean measures and standard deviations of this index for good and poor attenders. The mean scores suggest that students, regardless of attendance patterns and sex, receive moderately high satisfaction of their growth needs from school work. The highest level of satisfaction score is 3.65 which is the mean score for female poor attenders. Both female good attenders and male poor attenders achieved the lowest mean score of 3.53.

TABLE 4:15

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of the Individual Growth Need Strength Index for Good and Poor Attenders by Sex

Type of Student	Sex	Individual Growth Need Strength Index	
		Mean	Standard Deviation
Good Attender	Male	3.58	0.61
	Female	3.53	0.67
Poor Attender	Male	3.53	0.74
	Female	3.65	0.80

Teacher Perceptions

In order to be able to compare the responses of good and poor attenders with those of high school teachers Table 4:16 provides the mean scores and standard deviations for each of the indices used which reflect the teachers' perceptions of students' satisfaction with school. Of the four scales used, the mean scores of the teachers were higher than those of either good or poor attenders in all cases except for the index of individual growth need strength. In the case of this scale, the teachers' mean score was the lowest.

TABLE 4:16

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of School Work Satisfaction Indices for Students as Perceived by High School Teachers

Type of Index	Mean	Standard Deviation
School Satisfaction	3.51	0.58
Meaningfulness of School Work	3.41	0.72
Internal Work Motivation	3.98	0.56
Individual Growth Need Strength	3.46	0.76

V PERCEPTIONS REGARDING ABSENTEEISM AND CLASS-SKIPPING

A number of questions in the questionnaires used were designed to assess the perceptions of students and teacher on factors related to attendance procedures, absenteeism and class-skipping. The findings to these questions are provided below.

Attendance Procedures

One of the basic concerns in this section of the questionnaire is to assess the degree to which teachers take attendance in

their subject classes and whether students are aware of the practice. The other major interest is the effect that taking attendance or the concern expressed by teachers about attendance has on the attendance behaviours of students. The questions asked on attendance procedures and the percentage responses to them are provided in Table 4:17.

While 97 per cent of the teachers responding indicated that teachers do take attendance in their subject classes a slightly lower percentage of students held a similar opinion. In fact, approximately ninety per cent of the students indicated that teachers take attendance regularly. The difference between the responses of the good and poor attenders was 2 per cent which may be considered insignificant.

Although attendance may be taken regularly, the impact of this procedure on attendance behaviour is perceived differently among the three groups concerned. An overwhelming number of teachers, 91.1 per cent indicated that students are most likely to attend classes when attendance is taken regularly. The same level of confidence is not expressed by either group of students. Only 68 per cent of poor attenders felt that such procedures affect attendance behaviour whereas almost seventy nine per cent of the good attenders were of the same opinion.

The discrepancy in viewpoints widens slightly in the responses to the consequences of teachers' caring about attendance. Approximately ninety one per cent of the teachers think that students are more likely to attend classes when teachers are concerned about attendance. This level of response is similar to that of the previous question. In contrast, less than sixty four per cent of poor attenders share this opinion. The response of the good attenders is more consis-

TABLE 4:17

Comparison of Percentage Responses of Teachers, Good and Poor Attenders for Questions on Attendance Procedures

Questions	Respondents					
	Teachers		Good Attenders		Poor Attenders	
	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %
1. Do most teachers take attendance regularly in their subject classes?	97.1	2.9	91.3	8.7	89.3	10.7
2. Are students more likely to attend subject classes when teachers take attendance regularly?	91.1	8.9	78.9	21.1	68.0	32.0
3. Are students more likely to attend classes in which teachers care about attendance?	90.6	9.4	79.3	20.8	63.1	36.9

tent with their response to the earlier question. Thus, 79.3 per cent of good attenders were in accordance with the view that the teachers' concern about attendance will bring about a greater likelihood of students attending classes.

Absenteeism

A comparison of perceptions about absenteeism is provided by the data presented in Table 4:18. Of the three groups in the comparison, more good attenders than poor attenders or teachers perceive that parents are concerned about their children being absent from school without permission. While 87.8 per cent of good attenders held this opinion almost eighty six per cent of the teachers held similar perceptions. The greatest discrepancy is with the poor attenders. In this group 75.4 per cent felt that parents were concerned about absenteeism.

The pattern of responses to the question: "Are teachers concerned about their students being absent?", is substantially different to those of the previous question. Almost ninety seven per cent of the teachers indicated that a concern about student absenteeism exists among teachers. In contrast less than sixty per cent of the poor attenders perceived that teachers had such concerns. A slightly higher per cent of good attenders, 67.4, felt that teachers exhibited a concern about absenteeism.

In contrast, a greater per cent of both good and poor attenders perceive that school administrators are concerned about absenteeism. However, the greatest difference in viewpoint is between teachers and poor attenders. While more than ninety five per cent of teachers recognize that administrators are concerned about absenteeism only 82.1 per cent of poor attenders held similar perceptions.

TABLE 4:18

Comparison of Percentage Responses of Teachers, Good and Poor Attenders for Questions on Absenteeism

Questions	Respondents					
	Teachers		Good Attenders		Poor Attenders	
	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %
1. Are parents concerned about their children being absent without their permission?	85.3	14.7	87.8	12.2	75.4	24.6
2. Are teachers concerned about their students being absent?	96.5	3.5	67.4	32.6	59.7	40.3
3. Are school administrators concerned about absenteeism?	95.1	4.2	86.8	13.3	82.1	17.9
4. Are the actions taken by the students to limit absenteeism effective?	52.0	48.0	36.2	63.8	27.7	72.3

Positive responses by all of the groups regarding the effectiveness of procedures to limit absenteeism are less frequent than to the previous questions. In fact, just under half of the teachers feel that the attempts to limit absenteeism are ineffective. The responses of the students are even more negative. Only 36.2 per cent of good attenders were of the opinion that present practices to limit absenteeism were effective. Almost twenty eight per cent of poor attenders were of the same opinion.

Class-Skipping

A set of questions on class-skipping similar to the ones posed on absenteeism were included in the questionnaires. Table 4:19 contains the percentage responses to these items. It would appear that the lowest percentage of respondents who perceive parents as being concerned about class-skipping is to be found among poor attenders. Seventy seven per cent of the group felt that this matter was of concern while approximately eighty nine per cent of both teachers and good attenders held the same opinion.

In the case of teachers being concerned about class-skippers it is evident that a discrepancy in perceptions exists between teachers and poor attenders. Only 58.7 per cent of poor attenders think that teachers are concerned about this matter whereas 96.9 per cent of the teachers responded positively to this item.

Differences in opinion are less evident in responses to the issue of whether school administrators are concerned about class-skipping. Although poor attenders, with an 80.8 per cent positive response, have the lowest level of agreement on this issue it is much higher than the positive response to the previous question. In contrast 95.8 per cent and 85.6 per cent of teachers and good attenders respectively felt that school administrators are concerned about class-

TABLE 4:19

Comparison of Percentage Responses of Teachers, Good and Poor Attenders for Questions on Class-Skipping

Question	Respondents					
	Teachers		Good Attenders		Poor Attenders	
	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %
1. Are parents concerned about their children skipping classes?	88.8	11.2	89.6	10.4	77.1	22.9
2. Are teachers concerned about their students skipping classes?	96.9	3.1	69.0	31.0	58.7	41.3
3. Are school administrators concerned about class skipping?	95.8	4.2	85.6	14.4	80.8	19.2
4. Are the actions taken by the school to limit class-skipping effective?	56.7	43.3	31.7	68.3	25.7	74.3

skipping.

However, none of the responding groups were in overwhelming agreement that the actions taken to limit class-skipping are effective. Only 25.7 per cent of poor attenders hold this opinion in contrast to 31.7 per cent of the good attenders. Amost fifty seven per cent of the teachers think that present actions taken by the school to limit class-skipping are effective.

Two further questions were included in the questionnaires; one of which was directed to students and the other to teachers. In the case of the students they were asked to indicate whether they thought that attending school would help them to obtain a better job at some later period. Almost ninety five per cent of the good attenders responded positively to this question while only 82.4 per cent of the poor attenders had a similar view. Teachers were asked if the rules and regulations concerning attendance and class-skipping were well known by the students. Eighty five per cent responded positively.

Levels and Reasons for Absenteeism and Class-Skipping

While it is important to obtain some perceptions about topics such as absenteeism and class-skipping it is equally important to assess the base for these perceptions. With this object in mind, teachers and students were asked to respond to several questions relating to levels of absenteeism and class-skipping and reasons for absenteeism. This part of the chapter is concerned with the findings to these questions.

Table 4:20 presents the percentage responses to an open ended question which requested respondents to indicate the number of times a student should be allowed to be absent before it was considered a serious problem. Within the group of teachers, 66.7 per cent indicated that up to five absences should be the maximum allowable number.

TABLE 4:20

Percentage Distribution of Teachers, Good and Poor Attenders by Number of Permissible Absences

Respondent	Frequency of Permissible Absences						
	5 or less %	6-10 %	11-15 %	16-20 %	21 or more %	No limit %	Other %
Teachers	66.7	14.[illegible]	3.3	3.1	0.6	0.2	11.2
Good Attenders	44.4	26.0	6.5	5.2	3.1	2.3	12.5
Poor Attenders	30.6	21.0	5.0	7.7	7.7	10.3	17.7

In contrast, only 44.4 per cent of good attenders and 30.6 per cent of poor attenders hold a similar point of view. At the other end of the scale, 25.7 per cent of poor attenders think that absences of more than 16 days are permissible. The corresponding percentage for good attenders and teachers are 10.6 and 3.9 respectively. It is particularly significant to observe that more than 10 per cent of the poor attenders feel that no limits should be placed upon absenteeism.

A substantial percentage of the responses to both of these questions were categorized under "Other". The major reason for this category is these responses did not always provide a particular frequency but gave qualitative criteria as a guide.

Both students and teachers were also asked to indicate the number of permissible class-skippings. The distribution of the responses to this question are found in Table 4:21. While 95.1 per cent of the teachers are of the opinion that the maximum number of permissible class-skippings should not excede five, decreasing percentages of good and poor attenders held the same opinion. In particular, only 55.8 per cent of poor attenders feel that the limit to class-skipping should be five and a further 11.4 per cent of the same students think that no limit should be placed upon class-skipping.

In order to assess reasons for absenteeism a list of nine common reasons were included in both questionnaires. Using a four point scale ranging from seldom to very often, respondents were asked to indicate how often they felt each of these reasons were given for absences. The responses in a percentage format are presented in Table 4:22. To facilitate comparisions among the respondent groups the following description is based upon combining the responses found in the "Often" and "Very Often" categories.

TABLE 4:21

Percentage Distribution of Teachers, Good and Poor Attenders

By Frequency of Permissible Class-skipping

Respondent	Frequency of Permissible Class-Skipping						
	5 or less %	6-10 %	11-15 %	16-20 %	21 or more %	No limit %	Other %
Teachers	95.1	1.6	0.2	0.2	-	0.2	2.7
Good Attenders	72.7	13.6	1.8	0.8	0.8	2.6	7.6
Poor Attenders	55.8	16.4	2.3	2.3	2.0	11.4	9.7

TABLE 4:22

Percentage Responses of Teachers, Good and Poor Attenders

with Respect to Reasons for Absences

Reason	Respondents											
	Teachers				Good Attenders				Poor Attenders			
	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %
1 School is too boring.	17.4	57.4	21.3	3.9	9.5	43.3	29.0	18.3	10.0	38.4	27.7	23.9
2 School is not meeting needs.	30.5	51.6	16.1	1.8	46.9	32.2	14.9	6.0	35.7	34.4	19.7	10.2
3 Bad weather.	51.0	37.7	9.9	1.4	57.3	32.2	7.0	3.5	59.7	26.6	9.4	4.2
4 Didn't want to come.	19.1	44.8	25.3	10.8	12.5	29.5	35.3	22.8	13.6	27.9	28.2	30.2
5 To avoid tests or exams.	17.7	54.2	21.7	6.4	15.3	28.0	31.8	25.0	34.7	28.2	24.4	12.7
6 Too sick	16.0	39.4	28.6	15.6	18.3	42.5	21.0	18.3	19.8	40.3	25.3	14.6
7 Problems at home.	9.1	52.8	29.1	8.9	43.5	42.8	10.3	3.5	40.9	39.3	14.3	5.5
8 Going somewhere with friends.	23.0	50.5	22.2	4.3	16.5	34.2	31.7	17.7	23.1	31.2	26.9	18.8
9 Failing in school.	16.6	44.4	27.7	11.3	21.9	27.4	30.2	20.2	21.8	26.1	29.6	22.5

Explanation: The categories of responses are 1 Seldom 2 Sometimes 3 Often 4 Very Often.

It would appear that none of the groups perceive bad weather as a major cause of absenteeism since the combined positive responses of each group range from 11.3 per cent to 13.6 per cent. In contrast, around forty per cent of each group were of the opinion that sickness is often a major reason for the absence of students.

Among the remaining reasons for absenteeism there is a lack of common agreement with regard to the frequency of their use. In most cases, the discrepancy is between the teachers and students, regardless of their attendance patterns. However, both teachers and poor attenders do not perceive students being absent to avoid tests or examinations to the same degree that good attenders do. In contrast 17.9 per cent of the teachers and 20.9 per cent of the good attenders consider that the failure of the school to meet needs is often a reason for students being absent. Whereas just over twenty nine per cent of the poor attenders were of the same opinion.

Approximately fifty eight per cent of the students, regardless of attendance, felt that the most common reason for absenteeism is that students do not want to go to school. Only 36.1 per cent of the teachers hold a similar opinion. Failing in school and the fact that school is boring are considered by approximately half of the good and poor attenders to be two other major reasons given for absenteeism. In contrast problems at home were not seen by students as commonly used reasons for absenteeism. However, 38.0 per cent of the teachers considered that this reason was often used.

To assess the importance attached to school attendance both students and teachers were asked to indicate how often they or other students might attend school if attendance were voluntary. Table 4:23 provides the responses to this question. While 7.8 per cent of poor

TABLE 4:23

Percentage Responses of Teachers, Good and Poor Attenders with Respect to Voluntary School Attendance

Respondent	Level of Attendance			
	Seldom %	Sometimes %	Often %	Very Often %
Teachers	1.6	23.3	72.8	2.4
Good Attenders	2.5	9.5	47.1	40.9
Poor Attenders	7.8	16.6	58.1	17.5

TABLE 4:24

Percentage Responses of Teachers, Good and Poor Attenders with Respect to Rating of Levels of Absenteeism and Class-Skipping

Respondent	Levels of: Absenteeism					Class-Skipping				
	Low	Below Average	Average	Above Average	High	Low	Below Average	Average	Above Average	High
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Teachers	15.5	25.3	42.4	13.5	3.3	7.5	22.2	47.9	17.9	5.1
Good Attenders	4.2	7.5	62.2	19.4	6.7	1.7	8.7	55.2	24.9	9.5
Poor Attenders	1.9	7.8	49.8	24.9	15.5	3.2	6.8	48.2	20.7	21.0

attenders indicated they would seldom attend school an additional 17.5 per cent indicated they would attend very often if attendance were not compulsory. This contrasts dramatically with the teachers' responses which indicate that only 2.4 per cent of the teachers think that students would attend very often given the above conditions. More than 40 per cent of the good attenders indicate they would attend very often even if attendance were voluntary. In fact, 88 per cent of the poor attenders were of the opinion that voluntary attendance would range from often to very often. Approximately seventy five per cent of the other two groups hold a similar opinion.

Table 4:24 presents data on the rating of levels of absenteeism and class-skipping in the schools involved in the survey as perceived by teachers, good attenders and poor attenders. More than 40 per cent of poor attenders consider absenteeism to be above average or higher whereas 26.1 per cent of good attenders and 16.8 per cent of the teachers are of a similar opinion. A slightly greater percentage in each of the groups consider class-skipping to be above average or higher. Furthermore, a greater proportion of poor attenders, 41.7 per cent, perceive class-skipping to be above average or higher. In contrast, 34.4 per cent of good attenders and 23.0 per cent of the teachers hold the same views.

5 School Attendance in the Intermediate Grades

I INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the responses of a sample of good and poor attenders in the intermediate Grades VII-X inclusively to a questionnaire on school attendance (see Appendix A). The respondents were selected from Grades VII and VIII in eight elementary schools and from Grades VII-X in a special vocational school. Teachers in each of these schools were also asked to respond to a questionnaire similar to the one developed for the students (see Appendix A). Of the 268 students completing the instrument, 185 were classified as good attenders and 83 were considered to be poor attenders. In the case of teachers, 75 out of a possible 142 teachers completed the questionnaire which amounts to a return of 53 per cent.

Some explanation is appropriate at this point regarding the sample of students selected. On the basis of several enquiries it was concluded that absenteeism in elementary schools was not a significant problem in the lower grades. Consequently, the search for good and poor attenders was limited to Grades VII and VIII. While it was considered important to include a vocational school within our sample of schools it was not necessary that such a school be treated independently in this part of the study. Although the vocational school does not fit within the traditional concept of either an elementary or secondary school it was included with the elementary school sample. In this way, it was possible to consider absenteeism and class-skipping at the intermediate grade levels.

The test instrument used is identical to the one employed in the high school with the exception of two items which were modi-

fied for the elementary schools. Both objective and subjective questions are included in the questionnaire which provide information about the characteristics; family background; perceptions of school absenteeism and class-skipping of the students sampled. The analysis of the responses attempts to provide baseline data on the characteristics and perceptions of good and poor attenders.

II SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF POOR ATTENDERS

Of the poor attenders surveyed in the intermediate grades, 57.8 per cent were female which places the male poor attender in a slight minority. When poor attenders are classified according to age (see Table 5:1) it is apparent that the distribution is different to that of good attenders. In fact only 39.7 per cent of poor attenders are aged 12 or 13 whereas 64.9 per cent of good attenders are in the same age bracket. Thus, it would appear that the older students in the intermediate grades are more likely to be poor attenders.

TABLE 5:1

Percentage Distribution of Poor Attenders in Intermediate Grades by Age

Type of Student	Age of Student (in years)						
	12 or Less %	13 %	14 %	15 %	16 %	17 %	18 %
Good Attenders	26.5	38.4	24.3	4.9	3.8	1.1	1.1
Poor Attenders	12.0	27.7	27.7	19.3	6.0	6.0	1.2

Table 5:2 classifies good and poor attender by the subjects they most prefer. From the data it would appear that a difference in

the preference of subjects does exist between the two groups. The proportion of poor attenders who prefer English/Language Arts; Mathematics and Home Economics/Workshop are higher than those of good attenders. In contrast, the better attenders tend to prefer in order of importance: physical education, science, music and art, and history or geography.

TABLE 5:2

Percentage Distribution of Intermediate Level of Good and Poor Attenders by Most Preferred Subject

Type of Students	Types of Subjects						
	Language Arts	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	Music/Art	Phys. Ed.	Home Ed. Workshop
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Good Attender	4.3	14.6	10.6	7.6	10.3	29.2	23.8
Poor Attender	8.4	24.1	6.0	2.4	8.4	18.1	32.5

The students were also asked to indicate the level of academic achievement at the end of the previous academic year. The distribution of both types of students according to academic performance is presented in Table 5:3. While approximately eighty-five per cent of good and poor attenders performed at an average or above average level in the previous year, slightly more of the poor attenders, 51.2 per cent, were average in their academic performance. Despite the variations in the levels of achievement, attendance does not appear to be significantly related with academic performance in intermediate grades.

TABLE 5:3

Percentage Distribution of Intermediate Level Good and Poor Attenders by Academic Performance in June, 1977

Type of Student	Level of Academic Performance				
	Outstanding %	Above Average %	Average %	Below Average %	Poor %
Good Attender	8.2	41.0	44.3	3.8	2.7
Poor Attender	4.9	37.8	51.2	4.9	1.2

111 FAMILY BACKGROUND

Family background and related environmental factors have long been regarded by educators as playing a critical part in the actions of students. In this section of the chapter a comparison between good and poor attenders is made with respect to family background. Since it is impossible to assess the family background of students with the aid of a single variable it becomes necessary to use several variables to assess the relationship between the home situation and school attendance. Thus, factors such as: parents in the home; number of children; and the parents' educational level and occupation are considered in this study.

Table 5:4 presents the distribution of good and poor attenders by the presence of parents in the home. While the findings in this table may not be statistically significant it is evident that poor attendance is particularly pronounced for students who live with their mother only. In general, good attenders tend to come from homes with two parents.

TABLE 5:4

Percentage Distribution of Intermediate Level Good and Poor Attenders by Parents in the Home

Type of Student	Father and Mother %	Father Only %	Mother Only %	Guardian %	Other %
Good Attender	89.7	0.5	5.4	2.7	1.6
Poor Attender	71.1	3.6	21.7	0.0	3.6

Respondents to the questionnaire were also asked to indicate the number of children in their families, including themselves. The results are reported in Table 5:5. On the whole, it would appear that the pattern of attendance is not drastically affected by the size of the family. However, a greater proportion of poor attenders than good attenders are to be found in single child families and families with five or more children, 7.2 per cent and 32.5 per cent respectively. In contrast, it would appear that more than fifty-two per cent of good attenders come from families with two or three children.

TABLE 5:5

Percentage Distribution of Intermediate Level Good and Poor Attenders by the Number of Children in the Home

Type of Student	Number of Children in the Home				
	One %	Two %	Three %	Four %	Five or More %
Good Attender	4.3	26.6	26.1	15.8	27.2
Poor Attender	7.2	19.3	24.1	16.9	32.5

A commonplace view is that the social class of parents as represented by their level of formal education has a bearing on a student's academic activities. To assess whether the parent's education affected patterns of attendance, students were requested to indicate the highest level of formal education received by their parents. The results given in Table 5:6 suggest that the level of education of either father or mother is not related to the pattern of attendance. This lack of relationship may be attributed to the fact that more than thirty per cent of the students, regardless of attendance patterns, are unaware of their parents' education.

TABLE 5:6

Percentage Distribution of Intermediate Level Good and Poor Attenders by Parents' Highest Level of Formal Education

Type of Parent	Type of Student	Levels of Formal Education			
		Elementary %	Secondary %	College %	Don't Know %
Father	Good Attender	15.3	33.3	21.3	30.1
	Poor Attender	13.3	21.7	19.3	45.8
Mother	Good Attender	8.7	41.5	17.5	32.2
	Poor Attender	11.0	35.4	18.3	35.4

Another indicator of socio-economic status is the parents' occupation. The data presented in Table 5:7 indicates the percentage distribution of intermediate level students according to the occupation of their parents. Although little relationship exists between father's occupation and attendance, it would appear that the proportion of poor attenders coming from families belonging to the ranks of professionals and semi-skilled employees, 15.7 per cent and 25.7

TABLE 5:7

Percentage Distribution of Intermediate Level Good and Poor Attenders by Occupation of Parents or Guardians

Type of Parent	Type of Student	Type of Occupation									
		Unskilled Labour %	Semi-Skilled Labour %	Skilled Labour %	Clerical %	Managerial %	Professional %	Self-Employed %	Not-Employed %	Homemaker %	Other %
Father	Good Attender	2.8	21.9	23.6	19.7	3.4	10.7	5.1	2.8	-	10.1
	Poor Attender	1.4	25.7	22.9	12.9	2.9	15.7	7.1	4.3	-	7.1
Mother	Good Attender	-	12.1	2.1	28.7	-	6.3	0.0	-	47.1	3.4
	Poor Attender	-	13.0	0.0	20.8	-	9.1	1.3	-	53.2	2.6

per cent respectively, is slightly higher than the proportion of good attenders in these categories. Conversely, 19.7 per cent of good attenders come from homes where the father holds a clerical position whereas only 12.9 per cent of poor attenders are from a similar family background.

In the case of families where the mother is working outside the home, Table 5:7 indicates that 28.7 per cent of the good attenders and 20.8 per cent of poor attenders have mothers who occupy clerical type positions. By far, the greatest majority of mothers, regardless of student attendance patterns, are homemakers. These findings suggest that there is little relationship between attendance and the occupation of the students' mothers.

In an attempt to assess the relationship of ethnicity to patterns of attendance, students were asked to indicate the birthplace of their parents and the principal language spoken in the home. Approximately sixty two per cent of good attenders and seventy three per cent of poor attenders indicated that Canada was the birthplace of their father. Similar proportions of good and poor attenders, 66.7 per cent and 75.0 per cent respectively, reported that their mother was Canadian born. The parents not born in Canada originated from one of eleven other geographic areas. Thus, the data suggests, if anything, that students with one or more of the parents born outside Canada will tend to be relatively better attenders.

With respect to the matter of language spoken in the home, nine languages including English were identified from the students' responses. However, only 12.5 per cent of good attenders and 8.4 per cent of poor attenders indicated that a language other than

English was the principal language spoken at home. Since the majority of students sampled, whether poor or good attenders, indicated that English was the language of the home it is not possible tc relate attendance with this variable. In fact, it would appear that the national background of parents has little bearing on the issue of attendance.

To assess the importance of the location of a students' home with respect to attendance, students were asked to indicate the type of area in which they lived and the mode of transportation they used to travel to and from school. Table 5:8 provides the distribution of the residential location of good and poor attenders. A greater proportion of poor attenders, 75.9 per cent, live in cities than good attenders, 66.8 per cent. As a consequence, the proportion of good attenders living in other locations is somewhat higher. However, the relationship between these variables does not appear to be significant.

Table 5:8
Percentage Distribution of Intermediate Level
Good and Poor Attenders by Location of Residence

Type of Student	Location of Residence			
	City	Town or Village	Rural	Farm
	%	%	%	%
Good Attender	66.8	8.2	19.6	5.4
Poor Attender	75.9	6.0	15.7	2.4

The distribution of intermediate level students according to the mode of transportation used is presented in Table 5:9. While 48.4 per cent of good attenders go to school by public transit or school bus more than sixty two per cent of poor attenders use the same means of transportation. Presumably, those who live further

from school and use transportation are more likely to be away from school more often. In the case of those students within walking distance of the school attendance is slightly better.

TABLE 5:9

Percentage Distribution of Intermediate Level Good and Poor Attenders by Most Common Means of Transportation to School

Type of Student	Means of Transportation					
	Walk	Driven by Parent	Own Car	School Bus	Public Transit	Other
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Good Attender	35.3	0.5	1.1	40.8	7.6	14.7
Poor Attender	28.9	3.6	0.0	50.6	12.0	4.8

In a society which stresses that formal education is a preparation for the future it is important to examine the relationship between attendance and aspirations of the student as well as his or her parents and friends. For example, one can argue that those students who are seeking entry to university will be more predisposed to attend school regularly than students who wish to end their formal education as soon as possible. Furthermore, attendance might be affected by conflicting hopes and aspirations of friends and parents. Table 5:10 presents the distribution of students' responses to the question of future plans they wish to pursue; the aspirations that their parents have for their future; and the perception of their friends' future plans. If students' follow their own plans then 49.7 per cent of good attenders will attend some post-secondary institution in comparision to 39.7 per cent of the poor attenders. Thus, a greater percentage of poor attenders, 44.5 per cent wish to

leave school or work in some capacity. In contrast, only 21.4 per cent of the good attenders have similar aspirations. It would therefore appear that the pattern of attendance is related to a student's future plans.

When students were asked to indicate what they perceived their friends' plans to be, both good and poor attenders suggested that a lower proportion of their friends were bound for post-secondary education. Although poor attenders believe as many of their friends as themselves are planning to complete school and begin work they also feel that a higher proportion of their friends, 25.3 per cent, want to leave school as soon as possible. In the case of good attenders 15.9 per cent indicate that they wish to leave school or begin work themselves and at the same time feel that 43.2 per cent of their friends hold a similar viewpoint. It would appear that there is a degree of similarity in the perceptions of both good and poor attenders with respect to their friend's future plans which are significantly different from their own.

The greatest discrepancy in plans is found between the perceptions of parents' future plans for the responding students and their own perceptions of their friends' plans. For example, 77.2 per cent of good attenders believe their parents want them to pursue some form of post-secondary education whereas they feel that only 29 per cent of their friends intend to enter university or college. A similar observation may be made for poor attenders of whom, more than sixty two per cent were of the opinion that their parents' plans were for them to undertake some form of post-secondary education. In contrast, only 24.1 per cent of these same students thought that their friends wished to enter a post-secondary institution.

TABLE 5:10

Distribution of Intermediate Level Good and Poor Attenders by Future Plans

Plans made by	Type of Student	Alternative Future Plans					
		University %	College %	Apprenticeship %	Work %	Leave School %	Other or Undecided %
Respondent	Good Attender	33.9	15.8	5.5	14.8	1.1	29.0
	Poor Attender	27.7	12.0	7.2	26.5	10.8	15.7
Friends	Good Attender	19.7	9.3	7.7	30.1	13.1	20.2
	Poor Attender	16.9	7.2	8.4	26.5	25.3	15.7
Parents	Good Attender	57.1	20.1	4.3	9.8	0.0	8.7
	Poor Attender	44.6	18.1	6.0	21.7	0.0	9.6

The importance that parents attach to education is reflected in the fact that the responding students, regardless of their attendance pattern, were of the opinion that their parents did not want them to leave school before completing the high school requirements. However, 21.7 per cent of the poor attenders did think that their parents expected them to enter the work force after high school graduation. This particular statistic is consistent with the percentage of poor attenders who hold a similar position about their own plans and the plans of their friends.

A desire for some independence is part of the drive of students in their search for part-time employment. Since some jobs do encroach upon time required to complete school work it may well affect the attendance of students. To test this view students in the intermediate grades were asked to indicate whether they had a part-time job which averaged twelve or more hours per week. The responses indicated that 9.3 per cent of good attenders and 10.8 per cent of poor attenders were employed according to the conditions previously stated. On the basis of this information one may conclude that the relationship between attendance and job status is not relevant for these students.

IV LEVELS OF STUDENT SATISFACTION

A portion of the previous chapter was devoted to an explanation of the reasons and basis for the inclusion of items in both the student and teacher questionnaires which permitted the construction of indices of school satisfaction. It is therefore unnecessary to repeat these comments in any detail. However, it is perhaps helpful to re-state the meaning of the indices employed in the discussion of the findings.

In order to assess student satisfaction with school and school work four indices are used,namely: (1) school satisfaction; (2) experienced meaningfulness of school work; (3) internal work motivation and (4) individual growth need strength. In the sections that follow the mean and standard deviation of each of these indices for good and poor attenders by sex are compared with similar measures based upon the teachers' perceptions on these matters. These findings are presented in Tables 5:11 and 5:12. For each of the indices the mean value may range between 1 and 5.

The school satisfaction index is a measure of the degree to which a student is satisfied and happy with his or her work and so measures an affective response to school. According to Table 5:11 the mean score of good attenders, regardless of sex, is 3.44, which suggests that the level of satisfaction of these students with school is more than moderate. In the case of poor attenders, the mean measures of school satisfaction was 2.89 for males and 3.12 for females. For purposes of this study, any significant differences between the mean values are based upon inspection rather than any test of significance. According to this criteria the difference between the male and female poor attenders is not significant. However, the difference in the mean level of satisfaction between male good and poor attenders seems significant.

It would appear that good attenders in the intermediate grades are somewhat more satisfied than poor attenders particularly in the case of male students. However, the level of school satisfaction recorded by the students is not as high as that perceived by the teachers. Table 5:12 indicates a mean measure of 4.11 for school satisfaction as perceived by teachers. This difference is especially

TABLE 5:11

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of School Work Satisfaction Indices by Type and Sex of Intermediate Level Students

Type of Student	Sex	Types of Indices							
		School Satisfaction		Meaningfulness of School Work		Internal Work Motivation		Individual Growth Need Strength	
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Good Attender	Male	3.44	0.61	3.51	0.68	3.82	0.52	3.95	0.51
	Female	3.44	0.57	3.63	0.57	3.81	0.41	3.75	0.59
Poor Attender	Male	2.89	0.68	3.26	0.62	3.67	0.52	3.86	0.63
	Female	3.12	0.71	3.54	0.65	3.90	0.48	3.90	0.68

significant when compared with the school satisfaction measure of poor attenders.

The experienced meaningfulness of work index is an attempt to assess the impact of school work on students; particularly the degree to which the student perceives school work as being generally meaningful. The mean scores of this measure seen in Table 5:11 indicate that the difference between male and female good attenders with respect to the meaningfulness of work is marginal. Similarly, the difference in the mean measures of 3.26 and 3.54 for male and female poor attenders may be attributed to chance alone. Thus, while the measure of this index is relatively high for both types of students no significant differences emerge. One may therefore conclude that that lack of experienced meaningfulness of work does not appear to be a factor in school absenteeism among the intermediate grades. The mean value of this index for the teachers is 3.89, once again higher than that of the students.

Internal work motivation is an assessment of the degree to which an individual is self-motivated to perform in school. The mean scores of this index given in Table 5:11 indicate a small margin of difference among the various sub groups under consideration. For example, the greatest range is between the male and female poor attenders whose internal work motivation measures are 3.67 and 3.90 respectively. It would appear that self-motivation of the students is relatively high and is independent of sex and level of school attendance. Thus, lack of motivation does not appear to be a major factor in school attendance at the intermediate level.

The degree to which each student exhibits a strong or weak desire to obtain growing or increasing satisfaction from his or her

own school work is measured by the individual growth need index. Thus, high scorers on this index tend to respond positively to challenging and enriched school work whereas low scorers tend to find little satisfaction or motivation in their school wor[illegible] The mean scores for this index range from 3.75 to 3.96 which suggests that intermediate level students obtain a fairly high degree of satisfaction from their school work. The differences within the good and poor attenders as well as between them is not significant. Thus, it may be surmised that this factor is not critical to the level of attendance in intermediate grades although the mean measure of the teachers' perception of student individual growth need strength was high, 3.85, it did not follow the pattern set by the scores in the previous indices. In fact, the teachers' measure was almost the same as that for male poor attenders.

TABLE 5:12

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of School Work Indices for Students as Perceived by Intermediate Level Teachers

Type of Index	Mean	Standard Deviation
School Satisfaction	4.11	0.48
Meaningfulness of School Work	3.89	0.56
Internal Work Motivation	4.28	0.46
Individual Growth Need	3.85	0.66

On the whole, apart from school satisfaction, the means of the indices just examined are not very different for good and poor attenders and would therefore appear to have little impact on atten-

dance in the intermediate grades. Even in the case of school satisfaction, it would seem to be extraneous to the level of attendance.

V PERCEPTIONS REGARDING ATTENDANCE AND CLASS-SKIPPING

The behaviour of an individual is conditioned to a great extent by a variety of factors including the perception of the situation. It is therefore appropriate in a study on attendance behaviours that some consideration be given to the perceptions of the students and teachers on matters relating to school attendance and class-skipping. Thus, this portion of the report will summarize the more pertinent findings on topics concerning attendance procedures, absenteeism, class-skipping and reasons for absenteeism.

In the case of attendance procedures Table 5:13 provides the distribution of responses to certain questions on this topic by teachers and students. While an overwhelming majority of teachers are of the opinion that teachers take attendance regularly;the positive responses of the students are somewhat lower. A higher proportion of poor attenders, 70.3 per cent, than good attenders, 61.9 per cent, agree with the teachers perceptions. Both types of attenders support the view that students are more likely to attend classes when attendance is taken regularly. However, a greater proportion of the teachers, 93.0 per cent hold this opinion. Thus, the teachers appear to believe more ardently in the salutary effects of taken attendance than do the students themselves. Almost eighty per cent of both poor and good attenders feel that students are more likely to attend classes in which teachers care about attendance. Ninety three per cent of the teachers were of the same opinion.

It would appear that certain poor attenders are neither affected by teachers taking attendance regularly nor teachers caring

TABLE 5:13

Comparison of Percentage Responses of Teachers, Good Attenders and Poor Attenders in Intermediate Levels for Questions on Attendance Procedures

Questions	Respondents					
	Teachers		Good Attenders		Poor Attenders	
	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %
1. Do most of your teachers take attendance regularly?			61.9	38.1	70.3	29.7
2. Are you more likely to attend class when teachers take attendance regularly?	93.0	7.0	75.5	24.5	79.7	20.3
3. Are students more likely to attend classes in which teachers care about attendance?	93.0	7.0	79.1	20.9	77.1	22.9

about absenteeism. Among the good attenders, similar comments might be made. It would appear that the continued attendance of the good attenders would seem to be in spite of attendance procedures.

Responses to questions on absenteeism are presented in Table 5:14. Both students and teachers are in near unanimity in their perceptions that parents care about their children being absent without permission. The minor variations in the proportions of good and poor attenders who responded negatively on parent concern indicate the responses are independent of type of attender. The perceptions about teacher concerns for student absenteeism exhibit considerably less unanimity. Of the teachers responding to this question, 97.3 per cent expressed the view that teachers are concerned about their students being absent. In the case of the students, 78.6 per cent of the good attenders and 67.5 per cent of the poor attenders hold the same view. It would therefore appear that students with higher levels of absenteeism are more negative in their perceptions about teachers' concerns for student absenteeism.

Just over ninety seven per cent of the teachers feel that school administrators are concerned about absenteeism. In the case of students, 83.1 per cent of the poor attenders and 78.1 per cent of the good attenders perceive administrators to be concerned about absenteeism. Though a higher proportion of poor attenders then good attenders affirm this viewpoint the student responses are independent of type of attender.

The students' perceptions of the effectiveness of actions taken by their schools to cut down on unexcused absences is much less favorable than the teachers' assessment. While just over eighty per cent of the teachers indicated that such actions are effective, more

TABLE 5:14

Comparison of Percentage Responses of Teachers, Good Attenders and Poor Attenders in Intermediate Levels for Questions on Absenteeism

Questions	Respondents					
	Teachers		Good Attenders		Poor Attenders	
	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %
1. Are parents concerned about their children being absent without their permission?	98.7	1.3	97.3	2.7	96.4	3.6
2. Are teachers concerned about their students being absent?	97.3	2.7	78.6	21.4	67.5	32.5
3. Are school administrators concerned about absenteeism?	97.3	2.7	78.1	21.9	83.1	16.9
4. Are the actions taken by the school to limit absenteeism effective?	80.3	19.7	42.5	57.5	45.8	54.2

than half of the students disagreed.

A comparison of the responses of teachers and students to questions on class-skipping is provided in Table 5:15. The opinion that parents are concerned about their children skipping classes is almost unanimous for both students and teachers. Though a higher proportion of poor attenders than good attenders responded in the negative to this question of parental concern, there is no significant difference in the perceptions of the two groups.

Almost all of the teachers indicated that they are concerned about students skipping classes. This sentiment is also shared by the students but to a lesser degree. Thus, 80.7 per cent of the good attenders and 77.1 per cent of the poor attenders feel that teachers are concerned about class-skipping. However, both good and poor attenders have a more favorable perception about the concern of school administrators regarding class-skipping. The most manifest discrepancy in the perceptions of teachers and students is on the effectiveness of the school's actions to cut down class-skipping. Fully eighty per cent of the teachers feel that the actions are effective. In contrast, 58.2 per cent of good attenders and 65.1 per cent of the poor attenders disagree with this view.

Both teachers and students were asked to indicate the number of absences and class-skipping which might be tolerated before taking some action. The percentage responses to these questions are to be found in Tables 5:16 and 5:17. In the case of absenteeism, 82.9 per cent of the teachers thought that the number of permissible absences should be five or less. Students appear to be somewhat more lenient in that only 54.9 per cent of the good attenders and 50.6 per cent of the poor attenders would limit the number of permissible absences

TABLE 5:15

Comparison of Percentage Responses of Teachers, Good Attenders and Poor Attenders in Intermediate Levels for Questions on Class-Skipping

Questions	Respondents					
	Teachers		Good Attenders		Poor Attenders	
	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %
1. Are parents concerned about their children skipping classes?	100.00	0.0	96.2	3.8	92.8	7.2
2. Are teachers concerned about their students skipping classes?	98.7	1.3	80.7	19.3	77.1	22.9
3. Are school administrators concerned about class-skipping?	100.00	0.0	94.5	5.5	95.2	4.8
4. Are the actions taken by the school to limit class-skipping effective?	80.3	19.7	41.8	58.2	34.9	65.1

TABLE 5:16

Percentage Distribution of Teachers, Good Attenders and Poor Attenders in the Intermediate Level by Number of Permissible Absences

Respondent	Frequency of Permissible Absences						
	5 or less %	6-10 %	11-15 %	16-20 %	21 or more %	No Limit %	Other %
Teachers	82.9	4.3	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.4
Good Attenders	54.9	21.7	5.1	4.0	1.1	4.0	9.1
Poor Attenders	50.6	20.3	5.1	3.8	2.5	2.5	15.2

to five. Closer unanimity is achieved in the case of the number of permissible 'class-skips'. While 97 per cent of the teachers felt that some action should be taken if the number of 'class-skips' exceeded five approximately eighty-six per cent of the students, regardless of attendance patterns held the same view.

In both questionnaires, a list of common reasons for absenteeism were provided. Both the students and the teachers were asked to indicate on a scale from seldom to very often how frequently they thought these reasons explained absences from school. The percentage responses are presented in Table 5.18. Since the table provides much detail this description will be limited to a number of general observations regarding the relative frequency with which these reasons are perceived to explain school absenteeism.

Of the nine reasons provided, illness is considered by most teachers and students to be a major reason for absenteeism. More specifically, 75.0 per cent of the teachers, 54.4 per cent of the good attenders and 57.8 per cent of the poor attenders hold the view that illness is often a reason for absenteeism. In contrast, 'bad weather' and 'the school not meeting students' needs' are considered to play little part in absenteeism in the intermediate grades. In the case of the reason, 'school is not meeting students' needs', 91.6 per cent of the teachers feel that this reason seldom or only sometimes explained absenteeism. This opinion is also shared by 85.3 per cent of the good attenders and 74.7 per cent of the poor attenders. It is of particular interest to note that a far greater percent of poor attenders perceive this reason as an explanation than either of the other two groups. Just over ninety per cent of the teachers feel that 'bad weather' does not account for many ab-

TABLE 5:17

Percentage Distribution of Teachers, Good and Poor Attenders
in Intermediate Levels by Frequency of Permissible Class-Skipping

Respondent	Frequency of Permissible Class-Skipping					
	5 or less %	6-10 %	11-15 %	16-20 %	No Limit %	Other %
Teachers	97.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0
Good Attenders	87.0	6.2	0.0	0.6	3.7	2.5
Poor Attenders	85.9	5.1	1.3	1.3	2.6	3.8

sences.

Perhaps the greatest discrepancy in viewpoints is observed in the responses to the reason 'to avoid tests or exams'. About fifty per cent of good attenders indicate that this is often the reason for absenteeism compared with 40.3 per cent of poor attenders who hold a similar viewpoint. In contrast, the majority of teachers, 86.1 per cent, hold that this reason only occasionally explains poor attendance.

Nearly half of the teachers believe that 'not wishing to come to school' is seldom a reason for absences. Within the group of students, 42.7 per cent of the poor attenders think that refusal to come to school is sometimes a reason, whereas 46.7 per cent of the good attenders believe more strongly that just not wanting to come to school is quite often a reason for non-attendance. In the case of the reason 'problems at home' 18.6 per cent of the good attenders rate this item as a regular reason for absenteeism compared to 27.1 per cent of the poor attenders. The majority of teachers, 76.4 per cent feel that this reason seldom or sometimes explains absenteeism.

The consensus of opinion of the student and teacher respondents is that 'going somewhere with friends' and 'failing in school' are seldom reasons for absenteeism. Teachers in particular see these reasons as less of an explanation than do the students. The typical response of good and poor attenders is that 'boredom with school' is a common reason for absenteeism. In contrast, 94.5 per cent of the teachers consider that this reason seldom or only sometimes explains absenteeism.

In general, some discrepancies in the perception of the reasons for non-attendance may be observed. Good attenders see

TABLE 5:18

Percentage Responses of Teachers, Good and Poor Attenders in Intermediate Levels with Respect to Reasons for Absences

Reason	Respondents											
	Teachers				Good Attenders				Poor Attenders			
	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %
1 School is too boring.	52.8	41.7	2.8	2.8	26.1	42.4	22.8	8.7	19.3	44.6	15.7	20.5
2 School is not meeting needs.	59.7	31.9	6.9	1.4	46.2	39.1	10.9	3.8	45.8	28.9	19.3	6.0
3 Bad weather.	43.1	47.2	6.9	2.8	42.4	37.0	14.7	6.0	39.0	42.7	13.4	4.9
4 Didn't want to come.	49.3	41.1	5.5	4.1	23.4	29.9	29.9	16.8	18.3	42.7	19.5	19.5
5 To avoid tests or exams.	33.3	52.8	9.7	4.2	23.4	26.1	29.9	20.7	37.8	22.8	24.4	15.9
6 Too sick.	2.8	22.2	36.1	38.9	17.4	28.3	29.9	24.5	16.9	25.3	28.9	28.9
7 Problems at home.	20.8	55.6	19.4	4.2	43.7	37.7	15.3	3.3	34.6	38.3	14.8	12.3
8 Going somewhere with friends.	61.1	29.2	8.3	1.4	40.4	34.4	16.4	8.7	43.8	35.0	11.3	10.0
9 Failing school.	52.0	25.0	16.7	4.2	39.9	27.3	19.7	13.1	40.0	32.5	11.5	16.3

Explanation: The categories of responses are 1 Seldom 2 Sometimes 3 Often 4 Very Often.

factors such as: problems at home, avoidance of tests or exams; not wanting to come to school; failing in school; and bad weather. Poor attenders tend to feel that illness; boredom with school; and the school not meeting student needs as the more dominant reasons for absenteeism. Except for illness, the teachers perceived all the excuses listed as of little importance in explaining absenteeism in intermediate grades.

Students and teachers were also asked to indicate the level of attendance by students if school attendance were not compulsory. Their responses were tabulated in Table 5:19. Over ninety per cent of the teachers indicate that students would attend school often or very often. Good attenders are a little less optimistic and 33.7 per cent of poor attenders were of the opinion that students would attend only occasionally if school attendance were voluntary.

TABLE 5:19

Percentage Responses of Teachers,
Good and Poor Attenders in Intermediate
Levels with Respect to Voluntary School Attendance

Respondent	Level of Attendance			
	Seldom %	Sometimes %	Often %	Very Often %
Teachers	0.0	6.9	80.6	12.5
Good Attenders	3.3	11.0	51.9	33.7
Poor Attenders	7.2	26.5	45.8	20.5

Perceptions regarding the levels of absenteeism and class-skipping in the schools of the respondents are presented in Table 5:20. In the case of absenteeism, there is a basic congruence of

TABLE 5:20

Percentage Responses of Teachers, Good and Poor Attenders in Intermediate Levels with Respect to Ratings of Levels of Absenteeism and Class-Skipping

Respondents	Levels of: Absenteeism					Class-Skipping				
	Low	Below Average	Average	Above Average	High	Low	Below Average	Average	Above Average	High
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Teachers	26.0	19.2	54.8	0.0	0.0	71.2	19.2	9.6	0.0	0.0
Good Attenders	9.2	17.9	53.3	15.8	3.8	39.9	20.8	26.8	8.2	4.4
Poor Attenders	8.5	9.8	51.2	14.6	15.9	25.3	20.5	43.4	2.4	8.4

opinion between teachers and students. Though no teacher admits that the absenteeism level is higher than average, 54.8 per cent of the teachers do indicate that absenteeism in their school is average. Likewise, 53.3 per cent of the good attenders and 51.2 per cent of the poor attenders hold that absenteeism is average. However, a smaller percentage of students than teachers perceive absenteeism to be below average.

The perceptions regarding class-skipping are somewhat different. Over seventy per cent of the teachers consider that class-skipping in their schools is low and none feel it is above average. Students do not share this viewpoint since only 39.9 per cent of good attenders and 25.3 per cent of poor attenders regard class-skipping as low. In fact, more than ten per cent of the students think class-skipping is high. In both absenteeism and class-skipping, the perceptions of the students seem related to patterns of attendance.

6 Board Policies and Procedures

One of the tasks of this study is to examine the policies and procedures presently employed by school boards to deal with matters concerning school attendance. To carry out this activity it is useful to employ an analytical framework which takes into account not only current provincial legislation regarding school attendance but also school board policies. Thus, there are three parts to this chapter. Part one consists of the development of such a framework by which to analyse the policy documents made available by school boards across the province. The second part of the chapter is concerned with a review of provincial legislation and regulations regarding school attendance. The final section is devoted to an analysis of policy documents provided by school boards.

1 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Responsibility for educational matters in this country belongs to the provinces. Thus, it is the provincial legislature which possesses the authority to create and enforce legislation in the field of education. The provincial legislature in this province has exercised this right by creating a number of statutes which provide direction for the educational system. In addition to these statutes the Minister of Education has the authority to make regulations. These additional rules, although a secondary type of legislation, are just as binding as the statutes created by the legislature. While these regulations must fall within the parameters of the statutory legislation they are created as a consequence of the Minister's interpretation of the meaning of the statutes. It is therefore

evident that school boards cannot establish their own policies and procedures in total isolation but must make them within the framework provided by the p ovincial government. Figure 6:1 presents a pictorial representation of this framework.

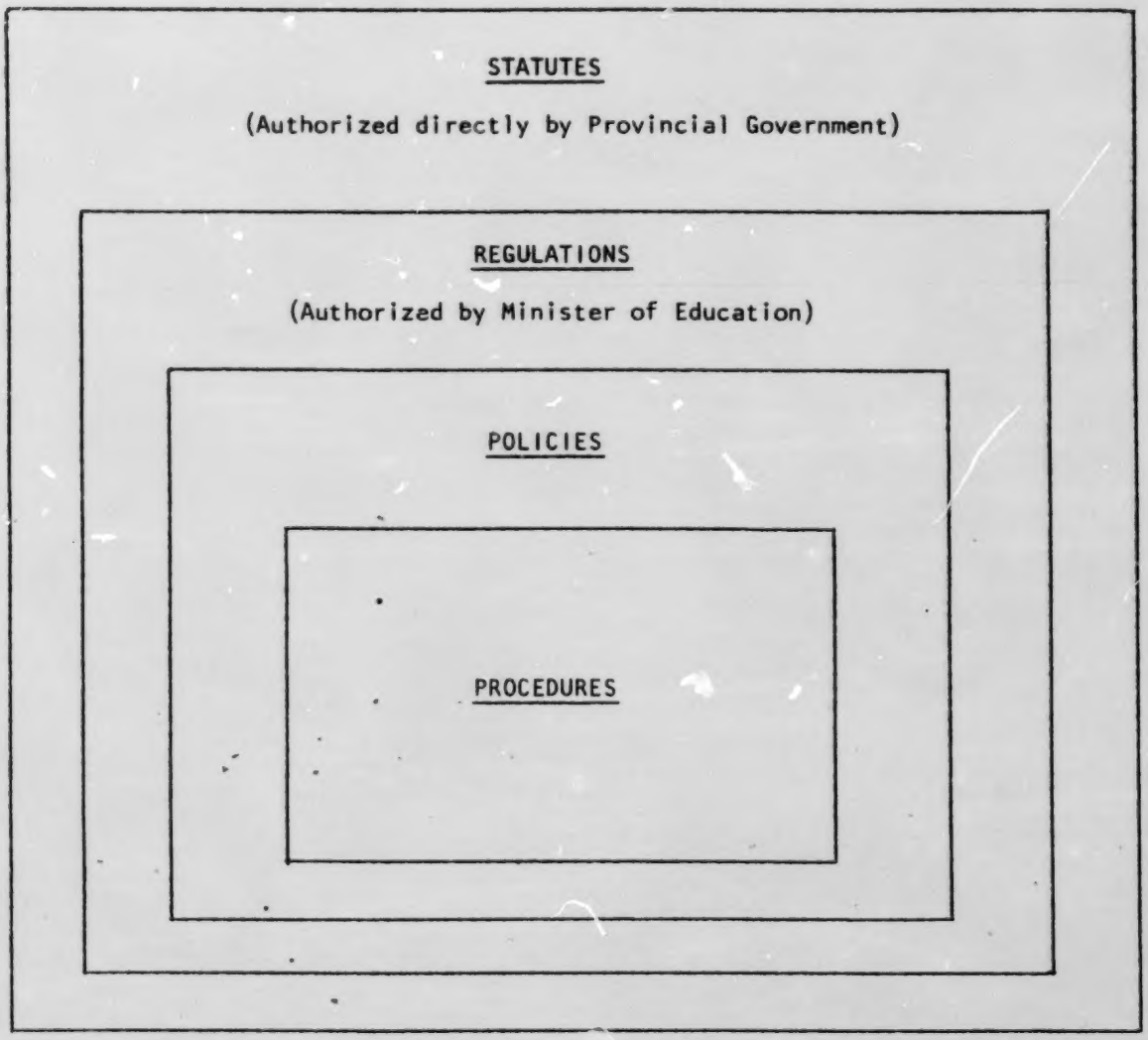
According to Figure 6:1 policy development must occur within the context of existing legislation and regulations. The purpose of a policy is to provide a set of rules or guides in an attempt to ensure that matters are treated in a uniform way. Although they do not carry the same weight as do statutes and regulations they are, nonetheless, considered to be binding upon those individuals functioning within the jurisdiction of the body which has established them. Thus, it is by means of policy statements that school boards regulate the actions of their employees. Such policies cannot contradict or ignore existing statutes and provincial regulations but must interpret them.

While careful attention is given to the wording of statutes, regulations and policies they are often stated in such a manner that some interpretation is necessary. Often, the interpretation of these guides can depend upon both the particular situation and the individual or individuals concerned. In an attempt to limit the ways in which individuals carry out similar duties many organizations develop specific procedures. The development of such procedures is possible with simple repetitive type operations such as the filling out of a register. However, it is more difficult, and is seldom attempted, in tasks that are more difficult to define and which require judgements to be made by the individual concerned.

On the basis of the above analytical framework, it is evident that a review of existing provincial statutes and Ministry

FIGURE 6:1

Relationship of Statutes and Policies



of Education regulations must be undertaken in order to provide the appropriate context by which to examine school board policies and procedures relating to school attendance. Thus, the concern of the next section of this chapter is the development of a set of questions based upon current statutes and regulations which will be used to assess existing school board policies and procedures relating to school attendance.

II PROVINCIAL STATUTES AND REGULATIONS

Most of the statutory provisions with respect to school attendance and absenteeism are contained within The Education Act, 1974. This act not only requires compulsory school attendance but outlines a basic scheme by which to enforce this requirement. More specifically Section 20(1) of this act requires that every child between the ages of six and sixteen years, unless otherwise excused, shall attend school on every school day. The reasons for which a child may be excused from attendance at school are provided in Section 20(2) as follows:

> "A child is excused from attendance at school if,
>
> (a) he is receiving satisfactory instruction at home or elsewhere;
>
> (b) he is unable to attend school by reason of sickness or other unavoidable cause;
>
> (c) transportation is not provided by a board for the child and there is no school that he has a right to attend situated,
>
> (i) within one mile from his residence measured by the nearest road if he has not attained the age of seven years on or before the first school day in September in the year in question, or
>
> (ii) within two miles from his residence measured by the nearest road if he has not attained the age of seven years but not the age of ten years on or before the first school day in September in the year in question, or
>
> (iii) within three miles from his residence measured by the nearest road if he has attained the age of ten years on or before the first school day in the year in question.
>
> (d) he has obtained a secondary school graduation diploma or has completed a course that gives him equivalent standing;

(e) he is absent from school for the purpose of receiving instruction in music and the period of absence does not exceed one-half day in any week.

(f) he is suspended, expelled or excluded from attendance at school under any Act or under the regulations;

(g) he is absent on a day regarded as a holy day by the church or religious denomination to which he belongs;

(h) he is absent or excused as authorized under this Act and the regulations.

According to Section 20(5) the parent or guardian of any child required to attend school is responsible for ensuring the child's attendance unless any of the above reasons permit the child to be absent.

While the provision requiring all children within established age limits to attend school is fairly unequivocal a certain degree of vagueness exists in the enumerated excuses. For example, the statute permits a child receiving satisfactory education at home or elsewhere to be excused from attendance at school but does not provide any definition of 'satisfactory'. Similarly, the nature and degree of a sickness which is considered to render a child unable to attend school is not specified. Such concerns may also be expressed about the remaining justifiable reasons for absence from school which suggests that this portion of the statute is susceptible to a variety of interpretations. A certain degree of latitude is necessary in order that modifications to the excuses may be made to suit changing times and differing circumstances. While the inherent flexibility may cause problems it does provide an opportunity for school boards to develop policies and procedures which are suitable to their situations. At the same time, however, the Minister of Education must be sensitive to the possible uneven or inequitable application of the law.

Despite the lack of specificity in the area of acceptable reasons for school absenteeism, the Act does have provisions to enforce compulsory attendance. Section 23 calls for the appointment of a Provincial School Attendance Counsellor, who is responsible for supervising and directing the enforcement of the statutes. In fact, the Provincial School Attendance Counsellor may exercise his powers within any school board jurisdiction. The succeeding section of the Act also requires each school board to appoint one or more school attendance counsellors to ensure that the compulsory school attendance requirements are adhered to at the local level.

Each school attendance counsellor is required by the Act "to enquire into every case of failure to attend school within his knowledge or when requested to do so by the appropriate supervisory officer or principal of a school or a ratepayer..." If, as a result of his inquiry, the local attendance counsellor concludes that a child has been improperly absent from school he must then give to the parent or guardian of the child a written warning of the consequences of such improper absence, and a written notice requiring the child to attend school.

If the parent or guardian disagrees with the local school attendance counsellor's conclusion that the child has been improperly absent, the matter must then be referred to the Provincial School Attendance Counsellor. On receipt of such a referral the Provincial School Attendance Counsellor must then appoint a committee of one or more persons to inquire into the matter. After receiving the committee's report of its inquiry, the Provincial School Attendance Counsellor may then issue a written order directing that the child be excused from school, or requiring that the child attend school.

While it seems likely that the Provincial School Attendance Counsellor would rely on the committee's findings in deciding which order to issue, the Act does not require him to do so. Indeed, the wording of the Act would seem to permit a decision to issue no order at all.

Provisions within Section 29 of the Act permit penalities to be applied against: (1) parents or guardians who neglect or refuse to cause their children to attend school; (2) people or corporations who employ during school hours a child who is required to attend school; (3) children who refuse to attend school or who are habitually absent. To further enforce attendance Section 30 of the Act makes school attendance counsellors responsible for instituting court proceedings when considered necessary. However, nothing in the Act appears to make the institution of such proceedings contingent upon the completion of inquiry proceedings by the Provincial School Attendance Counsellor. Furthermore, if an order made by the Provincial School Attendance Counsellor as a result of an inquiry has been issued prior to any court proceeding it may only serve as evidence rather than proof in the proceedings.

While the referral of disputed cases to the Provincial School Attendance Counsellors is clearly required it would appear that a school attendance counsellor could refer a case to both the Provincial School Attendance Counsellor and to the courts at the same time. Should a local attendance counsellor choose not to pursue a case through the court it is possible for the Provincial School Attendance Officer to initiate such action since he has all the powers of a local counsellor.

The duties of the school principal with respect to the registering of students and recording of their attendance is attended to

in Section 230. The same section requires principals to furnish the the Ministry and appropriate supervisory officers of the Board with any information they may have which affects the interests of the school and to prepare such reports for the local school board as are required by the board. However, there does not appear to be anything in the Act which specifically requires principals to report absences to school attendance officers.

The regulations provided by the Ministry of Education to deal with matters of school attendance give little amplification to the provisions made in the Act. In fact, Section 37 of Ontario Regulation 191 merely requires pupils to attend classes punctually and regularly. It also states that when a pupil returns to school after an absence the parent must give a reason for the absence either orally or in writing, at the discretion of the principal. The regulation also permits a student to be temporarily retired from school at any time provided the parent has sought and received permission from the principal. However, if a principal believes a pupil is making an unjustified use of this privilege then the principal is required to notify the board promptly.

The review of current statutes and regulations concerning school attendance reveals certain general directives which members of the school system must follow with respect to matters pertaining to attendance. In addition procedures are set out to enforce regular attendance. It is within this framework that school boards must operate.

In summary it would appear that the responsibility for the recording of each student's attendance and verifying the legitimacy

of any absences lies with the principal. In fulfilling this responsibility the principal may receive assistance from classroom teachers and other personnel. If cases of absenteeism appear to be unjustified then the principal may either deal with the matter himself or forward it to the attendance counsellor. In essence, some judgement must be exercised by the principal in deciding which cases can be handled at the school level and which are best looked after by the attendance counsellor. Those cases which are referred to the counsellor are likely to be ones which the principal considers require some special attention. On receipt of a case the attendance counsellor must decide the disposition of it. The alternatives available are to deal with the case himself or to refer it to the courts.

It is evident that the framework requires the exercise of much judgement at the board level. Thus, the school boards may establish their own policies and procedures to provide some uniformity in dealing with these matters and issues which are left unattended by the statutes and regulations. To examine the extent to which school boards sampled in this study have developed policies and procedures to deal with school attendance the following questions were prepared:

1. Do the policies provide any guidelines regarding the interpretation of the excuses listed in The Education Act, 1974, S.20(2)?
2. Do the policies specify any mechanisms to ensure that cases of absenteeism come before the principal for review?
3. Do the policies provide any guidelines or steps which the principal must follow when investigating cases of absenteeism?
4. Are procedures available which a principal must follow before making a referral to the school attendance counsellor? If so, what are the steps?
5. Do the policies provide guidelines with respect to the number or kind of absences required before a given case is referred to the school attendance counsellor?

6. What procedures exist by which cases are referred from a principal to the school attendance counsellor?
7. What procedures exist which must be followed by the school attendance counsellor when investigating cases of absenteeism?
8. Do policies or procedures provide guidelines for the school attendance counsellor in his efforts to secure attendance by a student?
9. Do the policies provide any guidelines governing the referral of cases to the courts?
10. Do policies contain provisions relating to any discretionary matters not mentioned above?
11. Do policies contain any provisions relating to matters which are not discretionary?

III ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES

The sample of schools used in the analysis of attendance patterns elsewhere in this study were located within the jurisdication of seventeen school boards across the Province. The school attendance counsellors of each of these boards were contacted by letter and requested to provide copies of any written attendance policies or local regulations established by their boards for general implementation within their jurisdiction. Replies were received from sixteen of the seventeen jurisdictions.

On the basis of the responses received it would appear that a majority of the school boards contacted have no written policies or procedures to deal with student attendance. Such matters would seem to be left to the discretion of individual principals and the school attendance counsellor. An initial review of policies submitted revealed that many were essentially restatements of provincial statutes and regulations. Little or no assistance was provided in a number of these documents to assist the principals or school attendance counsellors in dealing with the discretionary matters mentioned above.

To ensure that these findings were indeed representative of school boards across Ontario an additional fifteen school boards were requested to submit copies of their written policies and procedures dealing with school absenteeism. This second sample was weighted in favour of larger school boards on the assumption that such boards are more likely to develop comprehensive policies. An examination of the responses revealed that the findings from the first sample were not atypical.

The following analysis is based upon the combined responses received from the two sets of requests submitted to school boards. In all, twenty-seven replies were received in response to thirty-two requests. Since more than sixty per cent of the respondents reported that they had no policies or procedures relating to school attendance, it may be assumed that most of the five non-respondents also lacked any written policies or procedures on this matter. Consequently, the analysis is based upon an examination of policies submitted by ten school boards. The nature of the analysis takes the form of responses to the questions above.

1. Do the policies provide any guidelines regarding the interpretation of the excuses listed in The Education Act, 1974, S.20(2)?

Two boards reported policies or regulations that were subsequently judged to relate to this question. Of the two, one simply reaffirms the provincial legislation in the follow manner:

> 22.(2)(c) Pupils of compulsory school age shall attend school in accordance with The Education Act. 1974, Part II, Section 20.

The other board reported regulations which went beyond a mere re-statement of provincial legislation. This particular policy provides guidelines for the early dismissal of particular pupils on a given day at the request of the parents:

...the following guidelines are offered to principals with respect to parental requests:

1. Where the request pertains to the realm of home responsibility, it shall be accepted without question, e.g.:

   a) Music lessons
   b) Medical and dental appointments
   c) Home help

2. Where the request pertains to the realm of school responsibility, it shall be rejected, e.g. request for release of a pupil to attend a football game when school policy forbids this.

3. Where there is a misunderstanding between parent and principal arising from a release request, the principal shall contact the parent in order to clarify, and if possible, reconcile the two points of view.

4. Only the principal, or in his absence his deputy, may release a pupil from school during school hours.

5. All <u>telephone</u> requests for release of students from school during regular hours shall be verified by a return telephone call to the parent (not to the number given by the caller) before the student is released.

6. All <u>written</u> requests for release of a student during school hours shall be verified by the principal before the pupil is released.

7. In the case of <u>personal</u> requests for release of a pupil from school, the principal shall satisfy himself concerning the identity of the caller before releasing the student.

2. Do the policies specify any mechanism to ensure that cases of absenteeism come before the principal for review?

Four boards reported procedures related to this question.

One board's Elementary Handbook states that:

> A system whereby pupil absence is reported to the principal should be maintained. In addition, provision should be made for necessary action to follow up frequent absence and to determine the cause of absence.

Another board's Operations Manual contains two provisions:

> Each school shall carefully monitor the attendance of students according to Regulation 191 and the procedures.
>
> Attendance of students should be checked each period by classroom teacher and absences reported to the main office.

The requirements of the third board are similar to those of the previous in that: "each school adopt a procedure of reporting absenteeism". However, the policy statement is followed by a unique guideline suggesting that procedures for monitoring student absenteeism may be developed in consultation with the parent community. The procedures of the fourth board were more specific in that they require attendance be taken in the home forms each morning and that a list of absentees be sent to the school office by 9.15 A.M.

Two of the four boards have statements urging that parents be informed of the school's attendance expectations and procedures but the two policies differ in terms of the manner in which such information is to be acquired by parents:

> Students and parents must be knowledgeable of school expectations with regard to regular attendance.
>
> The procedures followed should be well communicated to the parent community.

3. Do the policies provide any guidelines or steps which the principal must follow when investigating cases of absenteeism?

Although the requirement that reasons for absences may be considered as part of attendance monitoring procedures, for purposes of this analysis they are classified as part of the investigation procedures. Several boards reported policies or procedures which require parents to give reasons to the principal, either orally or in writing, for their child's absence from school. In each case, however, the statements were essentially a re-phrasing of the provincial dictum. Alternatively, one board requires the principal to ascertain, to the best of his ability, the reasons for a pupil's absence. No guidance is provided for the principal in fulfilling this task.

Two boards reported policies or procedures which extend beyond the provision of reasons for absences. One board requires the principal to inform the parents or guardian of students who have been absent for two consecutive days or after a series of sporadic instances of the absences. In the case of the other board the principal is required to investigate absences before referring them to the Attendance Department. A third board reported that while it had neither a policy nor a set of procedures on this matter, it was generally understood by all the principals that when a student was absent for three days (one day in the case of chronic absentees) without communication the school would attempt to contact the home.

4. Are procedures available which a principal must follow before making a referral to the school attendance counsellor?

The need for such procedures does not appear to be very high since only one board deals with this issue and even then any referral appears to be discretionary:

> Notify the parent or guardian of absence not satisfactorily explained. Failing a satisfactory explanation, the Principal may refer the matter to the School Attendance Counsellor.

5. Do the policies provide any guidelines as to the number or kind of absences required before a given case is referred to the school attendance counsellor?

Five boards reported policies related to this question. 'Habitual truancy', 'habitual lateness', and 'spotty attendance' are the typical qualifiers most often used to describe cases for referral. One board requires the referral of any child suspected of being out of school without a lawful reason and where there is serious doubt regarding absences of more than two days. Another board simply states: "when a serious attendance problem is identified school administration shall report the case to the attendance counsellor". Two boards had similar provisions suggesting one day absences not be referred to the school attendance counsellor unless some pattern develops, or a crisis has arisen in the child's family. One of these boards added a particularly positive directive that referrals be made before a case becomes chronic. One board gave three specific situations in which the school attendance counsellor must be notified. These are: (1) when a student transfers to an unknown destination; (2) when a student's record is not requested by another school within three weeks after the time of the transfer; and (3) when situations arise within the school that may require police involvement.

Two additional boards reported rather general procedures which lacked the support of board policies. In the case of one of these boards principals were expected to contact the school attendance counsellor when the school was unable to communicate with parents or guardian of a student who had been absent for three days without any communication with the school. The general procedures employed by the other board require that cases be referred to the school attendance counsellor only when a student has been absent or truant

for a major part of the academic year and only after the principal's efforts to deal with the issue have not produced the desired results.

6. What procedures exist by which cases are referred from a principal to the school attendance counsellor?

Five boards reported policies or regulations related to this question. One board simply directs principals to report directly to the school attendance counsellor. One board requests the principal to make referrals in writing. Two boards request referrals to be made by telephone before 10.00 A.M. or 12.00 noon daily, respectively. One board encourages referrals either by phone or in writing, and provides a form for written referrals. Yet another board indicated that reports to the school attendance counsellor are made on a monthly basis. These reports provide information on the frequency of absences for each student.

7. What procedures exist which must be followed by the attendance counsellor when investigating cases of absenteeism?

Several boards require the school attendance counsellor to report his findings to the principal at the conclusion of an investigation. However, only one board offered a more complete set of procedures to conduct an investigation:

> 3.0 The attendance counsellor or School Home Liason Officer proceeds to investigate the referral.
>
> 3.1 He ascertains from his records whether previous referrals have been made.
>
> 3.2 He visits the Principal making the referral to obtain the fullest possible information re the referral.
>
> 3.3 In co-operation with the principal he may meet with other staff members concerned.
>
> 3.4 He investigates the referral and makes appropriate recommendations to all affected and does all within his power and ability to be supportive and to alleviate difficult social conditions for the benefit of the pupil under referral.
>
> 3.5 He reports briefly in writing to the Principal on conclusion of the investigation.

8. Do policies or procedures provide guidelines for the school attendance counsellor in his efforts to secure attendance by a student?

None of the responding school boards provided any policies or procedures to assist the attendance counsellor in ensuring the return to school of poor attenders. Consequently, counsellors must be guided by the provisions of the provincial statutes and regulations. The lack of established policy on this matter may well reflect the importance that school boards attach to this problem.

9. Do the policies provide any guidelines governing the referral of cases to the courts?

The policy statements of two boards require that court proceedings be initiated by the school attendance counsellor only 'when necessary' or 'unavoidably necessary'. Another board advises that court proceedings are to be used only as a 'last resort'. These are the only guidelines reported.

10. Do policies contain provisions relating to any discretionary matters not mentioned above?

Only three boards reported policies or regulations on this matter. These statements were limited to a requirement that reports of student attendance be sent to parents at regular intervals, or be included in all report cards.

11. Do policies contain any provisions relating to matters which are not discretionary?

Although a number of boards have policies or procedures on school attendance which are essentially provincial statutes or restatements of regulations, only one case was found in such statements which could possibly be construed as contrary to provincial requirements. The regulation in question is stated as follows:

> No pupil shall be allowed to absent himself from school for the purpose of taking lessons elsewhere except for necessary instruction in such courses as provided for in The Regulations of the Ministry of Education.

The inherent issue in this statement is a possible contravention of a pupil's right to be absent up to one-half day per week to receive instruction in music since provision for such instruction is provided for in The Education Act, 1974, not the Regulations of the Ministry of Education. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary it would appear that there is no intentional effort to contravene legislative authority but that an error was made in formulating the policy and that the reference should have been made to The Education Act.

IV SUMMARY

In dealing with absenteeism consideration should not only be given to the need to comply with compulsory attendance requirements but also the effect that absenteeism can have on the education received by a student. It is evident that the treatment of absenteeism by both provincial statutes or regulations and board policies or procedures reflect a sole concern for matters related to compulsory attendance. Consequently the statements on student attendance examined place an emphasis on: (1) the legitimacy of an absence (as defined by The Act); (2) the frequency of absences; and (3) the procedures to enforce attendance. While these concerns may be appropriate for provincial statutes and regulations one might have expected some recognition of the educational concerns in the policy statements of the school boards. However, in the absence of any policy statements on school attendance by a majority of the school boards one might conclude that school absenteeism is not viewed as a critical problem.

This viewpoint is further reinforced by the absence of procedures to assist principals and school attendance counsellors in dealing with poor attenders. Since the provincial statutes and regulations provide ample opportunities to exercise discretion in a number of areas it is of particular interest to note the lack of board procedures. In the absence of such statements it would appear that the onus of making decisions on matters of school absenteeism lies primarily with the school principal. In the absence of any uniform policies in many school boards one would expect to find matters of attendance handled in a variety of ways at the school level.

The apparent absence of board policies which recognize the educational issues associated with absenteeism gives cause for concern. If the situation that exists in some parts of the United States is not to be replicated in this province then some positive actions must be taken now to avoid or limit high incidences of absenteeism. To ensure such action it is important that school boards begin to recognize the need for an extensive review of the current approaches used in dealing with truants. Merely to enforce existing legislation is not the answer. In many cases, special services need to be developed to assist such students in coping with what is in essence a "re-entry" into the school system. Examples of alternative strategies in dealing with absentees will be provided in a later chapter. However, before comprehensive services of this type can be provided it is necessary that boards provide a commitment both in terms of budget allocations and in policy statements.

7 Improving Attendance in Schools

According to the responses to the questionnaires, there is a general consensus among both teachers and students in the elementary and secondary schools which were surveyed that class-skipping and absenteeism in their schools was in the range of low to average. In contrast, the perceptions of the effectiveness of school action in reducing class-skipping and absenteeism by students and teachers were somewhat incongruent. Teachers in general are more favourable in their assessment of their school actions on these two points than the students. Despite this difference in opinion, the teachers are not without suggestions for reducing class-skipping and absenteeism as well as the recording of absences and follow-up procedures. This observation was verified by the number of responses given by teachers to the item in the questionnaire requesting such suggestions. The major focus of this chapter is: (1) to report on the suggestions made by teachers to improve attendance in schools; and (2) a review of different approaches.

1 SUGGESTIONS TO REDUCE ABSENTEEISM AND CLASS-SKIPPING

Although absenteeism is less of a problem in elementary schools than in high schools, elementary school teachers provided a number of suggestions in order that the magnitude of these problems might be reduced. The suggestions to reduce absenteeism in elementary schools tend to revolve around two basic steps: (1) the identification of the absentee, (2) follow-up action both of a preventative and a punitive nature. Only a minority of teachers advocated no action because they felt that schooling should be voluntary. The teachers readily acknowledge that any improvement in identification will

necessitate more consistent record keeping and greater attention to attendance taking. In the case of follow-up action there is a division of opinion between what may be referred to as the liberal and traditional preventative measures such as better programs, improvement of class interest and demonstration of care and interest in students. The more traditional teachers recommend the use of disciplinary actions such as extending punishments; receipt of letters from parents before re-entry into class; and the notification of the attendance officer of any absences. A small number of teachers are also of the opinion that parents should be billed for any follow-up work that the school board has to undertake in the case of truants.

Among the suggestions to improve the recording of attendance there is a basic agreement among teachers that the procedures should ensure consistency in record keeping. However, beyond this point there is a division of opinion. Some teachers wish the control over registers to remain or be returned to the class-room teachers. Others would like to see the recording of attendance become the task of the school office. A number of teachers also favour the recordi g of student absences on their report cards for the information of parents. In addition, it is suggested that absences be recorded in each students' O.S.R. file for the information of other teachers.

Although the recommendations with respect to follow-up procedures take many forms, it is possible to categorize them as preventative or punitive. The underlying thrust of most preventative proposals is that increased parental awareness and involvement in the school is necessary to limit truancy. Most of the suggestions in this category required parents to be informed by phone as soon as possible if their child was absent or had skipped classes. Some teachers also suggest-

ed home visits by the attendance counsellor, teacher or other school official would also be helpful, especially in the case of chronic skippers. In one upper-middle income neighbourhood school, the institution of a Block Parent program was credited with a reduction in class-skipping and other absences experienced in that school. Under the program, particular homes are designed as Block Parent Homes to which students may go if they feel that they are being followed. Although the program was initially instituted as a precaution against child molestation, this particular program encouraged Block Parents to phone the school if students were observed on the streets during school hours. Some of the Block Parents are also employed to assist the Attendance Clerk in contacting the parents of children who are absent from the school without prior notification. While the program was initiated by the Parents' School Association to assist children it has led to a reduction in the work load of school administration and has provided an avenue for parental involvement with no added costs to the board. The major drawback of this type of program is that it may be difficult to introduce in areas with a high concentration of apartments, or where both parents are at work during the day.

An alternative preventative measure mentioned frequently focuses upon the classroom and the curriculum. Although suggestions varied somewhat, the common theme underlying them is an improvement in the climate of the classroom by making subjects more interesting and by offering programs that are more relevant to the life situation of the students. The feeling of many of the teachers making such suggestions is that the school in general, and the classroom in particular, should be made into a place which attracts students rather than one which repels them. To accomplish this end would require certain curriculum changes.

Suggestions premised on the use of sanctions were prominent in the responses of the teachers. These suggestions included detentions, loss of marks and greater enforcement of existing disciplinary measures. Conversely, some teachers suggested 'non-material rewards' for non-skippers though the nature of these rewards was not specified. Among the teachers there was also some support for improving procedures to prevent skipping. These included more consistent record keeping; the taking of attendance in each period; and more frequent checks of the attendance register.

Of the approaches described to combat class-skipping and absenteeism in elementary schools, preventive action is preferred by a more rigid enforcement of existing rules and regulations. In addition, most teachers recognize that there is a need to improve communications between home and school in these matters. Parents, on the one hand, should notify the school of any intended absences and the school should discourage parents from taking their children out of school for trips and holidays. Conversely the teachers or school office staff should contact parents about any absences of which the parents might be unaware.

The suggestions to limit absenteeism provided by secondary school teachers are not too different from those recommendations made by elementary school teachers. In general, the suggestions recognize that the problem cannot be resolved by the teachers and students alone but required the involvement of both parents and school administration. A small number of teachers, however, do think that the solution to the problem is to be found outside the school. The more dominant opinion is that assistance by parents in limiting student absenteeism would be especially helpful but would not resolve the issue completely.

All too often the helpfulness of parents hinges upon the

speed with which they can be informed of their child's absence. While the use of a telephone call is the most common practice in informing parents there are certain limitations. In some cases, parents cannot be contacted during the day because they are at work and such calls may not be regarded too favourably by an employer. An alternative approach suggested is to call the parents during the evening. Some teachers feel that a monitoring of the notes brought by students after an absence from school might also limit absences. In keeping with this suggestion, two teachers recommended a random checking with parents on the authenticity of such notes. The more common recommendations to deal with chronic absenteeism in high schools are based upon a consultative mode in which student, teacher, parents and counsellor are involved.

Some teachers feel that all that is required to resolve absenteeism is to enforce more stringently the present attendance policies. Such an approach would require the administrators to review the effectiveness of present penalities and perhaps add new deterrents. Among the sanctions preferred by some of the teachers are: withholding or loss of subject credit; detentions; suspensions; and finally expulsion. In contrast, a substantial number of teachers do not believe that an increased use of penalties by administration will reduce absenteeism. These individuals would prefer to try to resolve the issue by attempting to raise the level of student interest through improvements in curricula and school programs. To facilitate this recommendation smaller classes and more homogeneous groupings of students are also advocated. Only a minority feel that too much concern is being expressed about matters of attendance and that the students should be free to make their own judgements about attending classes. The under-

lying attitude of some of these teachers seems to be that students are too protected and should be encouraged to accept responsibility for their own actions, particularly with respect to attending classes.

At the other extreme, some teachers recommend that teachers should improve their communications with students in order to heighten the students' awareness of the possible implications and consequences of habitual absenteeism. In keeping with this proposal, deterrents in the form of reductions in privileges to participate in a number of activities which appeal to students such as sports and excursions were recommended by some teachers. If such procedures failed to reduce absenteeism then teachers felt that more demanding procedures should be instituted such as requiring medical certificates after a designated number of days absence. If no certificate were provided then administrators should be allowed to suspend a student pending a meeting among the school officials, teacher and parents.

A number of teachers are of the opinion that reducing absenteeism is not a fundamental responsibility of the teacher. Consequently, the involvement of the teacher in this activity should be quite limited. Thus, some teachers feel that their involvement is merely of a clerical nature which requires keeping attendance records; taking attendance each period; scrutinizing notes; signing admission slips; and liaising with the school office.

Of the more long term suggestions, the need for an improvement in social attitudes of both students and public with respect to school attendance was the most significant. Those making this type of recommendation seem to believe that the re-education of the public on matters such as class attendance and related issues is a precursor to any improvement in attendance. Other suggestions based upon changes in

social policy include improving the health of society at large; a reduction in the number of working mothers; and the linking of family allowance payments with attendance. Such suggestions however were in a minority.

Like their colleagues in the elementary schools, high school teachers are in basic agreement that the procedures in recording of attendance should be consistent. However, some teachers expressed concern that existing procedures are already time consuming. The most common procedure recommended is that attendance should be taken more frequently, although no consensus could be gleaned from the responses with respect to the preferred frequency of attendance taking. The modal view is that attendance should be taken every period while others feel that attendance be taken only in the home-rooms twice a day. In either case, teachers agree that the office should be notified of absences in order that a master list may be compiled for subsequent follow-up action. Some of the teachers in larger schools suggested that computerization of attendance would permit greater efficiency, provided additional clerical assistance is available to expedite the process.

Basic agreement also exists among many teachers that any follow-up of absentee students should be the responsibility of the teacher, presumably because he or she knows the student best. An alternate group of teachers are inclined to view such follow-up activities as the primary responsibility of the office but wish to be informed of any subsequent actions with respect to the student concerned.

The most common follow-up action recommended by teachers is that the parents be contacted by phone. Where this procedure is not possible a letter should be mailed to the parents informing them of

their child's absence. On a student's return to school after an absence, many teachers are of the opinion that admission to classes should only be allowed when the student has received a duly authorized admission slip from the school office or presents a note from his or her parents. In the case of situations of severe attendance problems then teachers are of the opinion that others such as the student counsellor; the attendance counsellor and parents should be consulted.

In secondary schools, the survey indicates that the student perception of skipping is more unfavourable than that of the teachers. More than a third of the students in the survey believed that skipping is above average or higher compared with less than a fifth of the teachers. However, despite their more favourable opinion, teachers were not inhibited in offering a plethora of suggestions in an effort to reduce class-skipping.

A substantial proportion of secondary school teachers are of the opinion that class-skipping can be significantly reduced by a more vigorous enforcement of the existing rules and regulations. Moreover, these teachers also felt that follow-up procedures such as notifying parents after their child has skipped classes a specified number of times is particularly important. However, some teachers feel that parents should be notified immediately after each incident while others indicate that this action should be undertaken only after a given number of class-skips.

Some teachers feel that the taking of attendance for each class on a regular basis would be a deterrent, sufficient in itself. Others suggest that improvements in the supervision of students in the school and monitoring of students in the school halls would reduce class-skipping. In schools where attendance taking is centralized, teachers favour the distribution of master attendance lists to

each teacher before the commencement of the second class to enable them to monitor student attendance. Several teachers were especially critical of communication between the teacher and office in their schools. Conversely, some of the researchers found that the office staff felt that teachers should undertake attendance and class-monitoring matters more conscientiously particularly in communicating class-skipping and absenteeism to the office.

Among the teacher respondents, the application of sanctions as a method to control class-skipping had greatest support. However, differences regarding the specific nature of the penalties were encountered. A substantial number of teachers preferred a scheme whereby class-skipping would lead to a reduction in student marks. Detentions were also suggested as an alternative form of punishment. The third most common sanction suggested was the development of a scheme whereby a student would be suspended after a certain number of 'class-skips'. If this sanction would not produce a favourable result then some teachers felt that the school should institute procedures to expell the student.

A group of teachers, though they are in a minority position, favour no make-up work for unjustifiable class-skipping. Conversely, a similar number of teachers feel that students who skip classes should be required to do make-up work before re-admission to class. An even smaller percentage of teachers suggested that the receipt of family allowances or child welfare payments should be linked to school attendance. Some teachers even suggest that legal actions be brought against parents of class-skippers although the basis for this action was not made clear. An alternative suggestion supported by some of the respondents is that parents pay tuition fees if their children,

who are considered to be habitual truants or class-skippers, have to repeat a course or academic year. A handful of teachers suggest that the reporting of attendance on the O.S.R. cards and the right to report the student's record attendance to prospective employers might also limit class-skipping.

Some teachers were of the opinion that the return to compulsory final exams would have a beneficial effect. Implicit in this suggestion is that the incidence of skipping increases in the interval between the last test in the school year and the exam week for those who choose to opt out of the finals. Therefore, if they have already 'passed' the course then the urgency to attend classes in subsequent classes diminishes. Reduction in the free time of students is thought by some to affect class attendance.

A rather small segment of the respondents view the emphasis of rewards rather than sanctions as a viable means to improve class attendance. A typical suggestion is that students should receive bonus marks for acceptable levels of class-attendance. One or two teachers even suggested that the school provide financial inducements in order to encourage students to attend school regularly.

A significant number of the teachers favour actions on the part of teachers and administrators which will motivate students to attend class regularly and assist them in developing favourable attitudes toward school. The overwhelming feeling of this particular group is that teachers should strive to make their class presentations more interesting and challenging. Complementary to this approach is a suggestion that teachers exhibit more care about students. Some teachers feel that this concern over students should extend beyond the classroom through improved counselling services. In addition,

other teachers feel that a reduction in class size would facilitate the development of such attitudes. Still others would like to see students streamed into more homogeneous groupings according to ability and apitude to facilitate the development of classroom materials that are challenging and interesting to the whole class. In a similar vein, it was suggested that special classes be set up to assist students with problems that are related to class-skipping and truancy.

A number of teachers feel that the reduction of class-skipping can only come about if parents strongly support the policies and procedures employed by the school. Since parents are not always familiar with such policies and regulations then school administrations should plan to make efforts to educate parents about such matters. A very small minority of teachers conveyed the position that class attendance should be voluntary rather than compulsory.

On the whole the suggestions for dealing with class-skipping and truancy seem to derive from existing practices employed in Ontario schools. If there is any single action which teachers feel would enhance attendance it is a more vigorous enforcement of the present procedures. Some differences do exist with respect to the methods of enforcement. Some teachers would prefer to see sanctions vigorously employed while others support approaches which make schools more attractive.

II ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

In addition to the recommendations made by teachers to deal with matters of absenteeism and class-skipping a review of the literature revealed a number of alternative approaches. Instead of describing each alternative in detail an attempt was made to classify them into five categories. For this portion of the report, one or more

examples were selected from each category and are described in some detail. The particular categories selected are: (1) student contracts; (2) home visit program; (3) remediation; (4) tied credits; and (5) open campus. Although the application of each of these methods has met with some success it must be remembered that any attempt to employ one of these approaches may require some modification of the method because of particular characteristics of the Ontario educational system.

Student Contracts

The use of contracts with students to ensure attendance is not new. Such contract approaches are generally based upon the principle of operant condition. This approach does not claim to deal with the underlying causes of maladaptive behaviour but merely limits activities to inducing desirable behaviours through the use of rewards and sanctions. Brooks[1] reports, in some detail, the employment of contingency contractual arrangements with chronic truants in Centennial Intermediate School, California. Figure 7:1 provides an example of the type of contract typically used by Brooks. In this particular case, Mary followed the provisions of the contract and received the rewards delineated in it. After six weeks, written contracts were no longer used and Mary continued to attend classes regularly. At the time the contracts were discontinued it appeared that there were several attitude changes taking place in both Mary and her mother. First of all, Mary reported that she felt school was not so bad after all and that she even liked a few of her teachers. Second, she stated that she thought she would like to start planning for her future and that she was now considering going on to a junior college. Finally, Mary's mother appeared to have a more positive attitude toward Mary and was

FIGURE 7:1

An Example of a Contract

NAME: Mary A.

PROBLEM: Excessive period and full-day truancy.

BACKGROUND: Mary has missed as much as four days of school each week during the first quarter. She has been continually counseled, and her mother has (1) restricted her for long periods of time (Mary is now on restriction), (2) "blistered her with a belt", and (3) threatened to remove Mary from school. Mary continued to be truant.

BEHAVIORAL IMPLEMENTATION:

Mary will do the following in exchange for the rewards stated below:

(1) Mary will attend every class she is scheduled into. (2) Mary will have her teacher initial an attendance card at the end of each period. (3) Mary will turn in the attendance card at the end of each school day. (4) Mary will record on a chart in the counseling office the number of classes she attended. (5) Mary will attend a group rap session once a week.

REWARD SCHEDULE:

Successful completion of the implementation will be rewarded in the following manner:

Week One: Mary will be taken off restriction for four (4) hours Friday night (time specified by mother).

Week Two: Mary will be taken off restriction for four (4) hours Friday night (time specified by mother) and six (6) hours Saturday (time specified by mother).

Week Three: All restrictions for Friday and Saturday will be removed.

Following the third week a conference will be held, during which a determination will be made as to a new reinforcement schedule.

SIGNATURE AND AGREEMENT STATEMENTS

I agree to follow the contract and dispense the rewards according to the provisions stated above.

Mrs. A. _____

I agree to follow the provisions of this contract (1 through 5).

Mary A. _____

I agree to monitor this contract and to make a written or verbal progress report to Mary and her mother at the end of each week.

Counselor _____

very pleased that Mary was attending school.

A welcome side effect emerged from this method of dealing with the truancy problem. The counselor no longer had to spend much time with this one student. Instead of seeing Mary for an hour to discuss what would happen if her truancy continued, the counselor found that a casual visit with her for a few minutes to reinforce her new more desirable behaviour was sufficient.

The use of contingency contracts, as Brooks suggest, has a number of advantages.[2] First, from a time management point of view it is economical. Once a contract is set up, the monitoring of the contract is relatively easy. Secondly, the contract places the responsibility on the student. Thirdly, a contract which involves parents gives some degree of responsibility to them. Fourthly, the contract also shows that the counsellor or teacher cares in a concrete way.

Home Visit Programs

This type of program is based upon the concept that any lasting observable changes in school behaviour can only be brought about with the assistance of parents. Erickson and others[3] reviewed the School-Home Contact Program for the New York City Board of Education in 1970-71. The final report of this project indicates that the program achieved among other things: (1) a reduction in absenteeism; class-skipping, and class tardiness; (2) an improvement in school-parent relations; and (3) an improvement in student attitudes towards school.

The success of the program rested upon the employment of individuals as Family Assistants who were familiar with the community. After a period of training and orientation, a Family Assistant was assigned to visit the homes of senior high school students who evi-

denced serious problems in school attendance; adjustment; or academic achievement. The task of these para-professionals was to assist parents in better understanding the expectations of the school for their children. In addition, suggestions of ways in which parents might assist their children in adjusting to and achieving in the school system were also made.

Such assistants were employed on a part-time basis and were expected to average three to four visits per day although some visits were made in the evening or during the weekend. Each assistant was assigned to deal with 150 problem students. Although total costs for the program are not provided the report did indicate that the assistants received approximately $3.00 per hour plus public transportation expenses. Some complaints were expressed regarding the clerical component of the job and the need for closer liaison with teachers but it was generally felt that the program was instrumental in reducing absenteeism and related problems. Unfortunately, no quantitative data are presented to indicate the degree of change in attendance.

Remediation

Some educators believe that the nature of the educational program has a bearing on the levels of class-skipping and absenteeism. As a consequence, a number of programs which have registered success in reducing attendance problems have been based upon curriculum changes. In some cases the curriculum changes were made within the school while in others the new curriculum is associated with an alternative school.

The FOCUS[4] program developed in Portland, Oregon, and the Learning Centre Program[5] of Anaheim, California, are examples of programs developed in a school to combat absenteeism. In the case of FOCUS, the program served approximately 100 students in Grades IX to

XII, most of whom had histories of low academic achievement; poor attendance; attitudinal and behavioural problems. The curriculm for these students was re-designed regularly as a consequence of student and staff inputs. Although the program did not have any compulsory courses the program was built around five basic categories of study and activities, namely:

a) Communication - activities centre upon modes of communication.

b) Analysis - activities emphasize a critical examination of man's environment.

c) Values - activities are directed towards a review of individual and social values.

d) Realities - activities focus upon economic, political and vocational dimension of life.

e) Electives - a variety of topics of a non-academic nature.

To operate the program five full-time teachers and one half-time teacher were employed; with one of the teachers having leadership responsibilities.

The program emphasized the development of the affective domain of the students in the belief that significant academic development cannot occur until a student's feeling of self-doubt; inadequacy; and detachment are recognized and resolved. While students in the program indicated improved academic performance they also exhibited improvements in attendance. Thus, more than seventy per cent of those classified as poor attenders were absent for less than 12.5 per cent of the days they were enrolled in the program.

The Learning Centre Program provides an alternative example of a modified program within a school which also relied upon affective changes in order to improve student attendance and achievement. Enrolment in this program was entirely voluntary and students were allow-

ed to progress at their own rate. Although the program included the traditional courses a different teaching approach was emphasized. More specifically, every attempt was made to design courses around activities and projects. Attendance and punctuality were emphasized.

At the end of the academic year, 1973-74, approximately seventy five per cent of the students who persisted with the program improved their attendance performance. In fact, the total days lost for the group dropped from 2,237 to 1,432 in one year. An assessment of the perceptions of students in the program revealed that around seventy three per cent of them thought that their attendance had improved and 68 per cent indicated they were more enthusiastic about attending school. The author attributes the success of the program to smaller classes; high teacher commitment; the activity centred approach and adequate teacher aide and clerical support.

In 1963 the Chicago Board of Education initiated the IMPACT[6] (Improvement of Attendance and the Curtailment of Truancy) program which offered a remedial program independent of regular school activities and administration to deal with students who exhibited attendance and behavioural problems. The program itself was designed to assist boys between the ages of seven and thirteen inclusively. Each class had between five and ten students who received instruction from an experienced male teacher.

Admission to the program was on a referral basis after prior screening by the principal and district superintendent. Each case, after referral was reviewed by an IMPACT committee which consisted of a principal, social worker, psychologist, nurse, and head attendance officer. The committee was chaired by the District Superintendent. Each review by the committee was based upon the student's file which provided data such as cumulative school record, teacher evalua-

tions, psychological appraisals, health history, attendance record, social workers evaluation of the status of the student and his family. Once the decision to admit the child was made then recommendations regarding his school program, extra-curricular activities and any health and social service follow-up were agreed upon. The progress of the student was carefully monitored throughout the program to assess when the child was ready to return to his regular class. Although the length of stay could vary it would not exceed two years.

The success of this particular program in reducing truancy and improving academic achievement has been attributed to the program with its flexible curriculum schedules and activities which was geared for boys. Of significant importance was the teachers who were not only well-trained and experienced but possessed an element of empathy in dealing with the boys.

Tied Credit and Attendance

The underlying principle in relating course credits with attendance is to reward desirable behaviour and to reinforce reliable attendance by the use of sanctions. In the literature, a number of programs in which the receipt of course credits is dependent upon attendance have been reported as successful in improving not only attendance but also school achievement and student attitudes. Although each program links attendance with the receipt of credits, the procedures employed vary significantly. Three examples are provided below which illustrate alternative approaches.

The first example is based upon the Attendance Policy[7] of Boulder High School, Colorado, which employs a somewhat traditional

FIGURE 7:2

Example of a Letter to Parents
used by Boulder High School

Dear Parent:

In order to help us work with you toward what is best for your son or daughter, we are attempting to individualize our attendance procedures. Please express to us which of the following procedures you would like for us to use with them regarding the reporting of absences. We will mark the records accordingly, notify each of their teachers of your desires, and do our best to follow through according to your wishes. If this form is not returned, we will follow Category 2.

* * * * * * *

CATEGORY 1 - I feel that _____ should be completely responsible for his/her own attendance and for the consequences of any problem created. Please do NOT contact me about the problems other than severe illness, injury, or withdrawal from enrollment in school.

_____ _____
Relationship Signature

- -

CATEGORY 2 - I believe that _____ should handle most judgmental situations and negotiate solutions to most problems on his/her own without my involvement. Please contact me ONLY if his/her actions seem not to justify this. I wish to be notified ONLY when the conduct or attendance is creating a problem for him/her or for the smooth functioning of the class or of the school. This notification will occur BEFORE the problem becomes too serious to solve. I will notify the school of any circumstances beyond the student's control (such as illness or family emergency) which would prevent attendance.

_____ _____
Relationship Signature

- -

CATEGORY 3 - It is my belief that _____ should be present for every class on every day that is scheduled unless I have notified the school otherwise. I want to be notified by school personnel as soon as is reasonable (usually the following day) after the absence or tardiness occurs.

_____ _____
Relationship Signature

_____ _____
Home Phone Business Home

Other contact in case these fail _____
Name Phone

approach to this matter. Prior to registration, letters are sent out to parents asking them to indicate their wishes with respect to notification by the school should their son or daughter be absent from school. A sample of this letter is provided in Figure 7:2. In essence, parents select from three alternative courses of communication on matters of absenteeism: (1) no contact (since the son or daughter should be completely responsible for their own attendance); (2) ask to be notified of any absence or tardiness; (3) notify only if conduct or attendance is creating a problem. If the completed form is not returned to the school then it automatically follows that parents are only notified if the conduct of their child is creating a problem for the school or the child. The attendance policy itself relies upon the coordinated effort of students, parents, and teachers.

Each student is expected to attend all classes for which he or she is registered. Absence from a class may result in loss of credit when the teacher has formally placed the student on probation for lack of attendance and the student fails to fulfill the requirements of that probation. Should a student demonstrate mature work habits then a teacher may make a contractual arrangement with a student based upon an attendance pattern different from the regular one if the requirements of the class warrant deviation from the daily attendance requirements. Furthermore, parents are required to notify the school of any planned absences. All work missed during such absences must be made up within five days of returning to school or within the time limits specified by the teacher. All such work should be completed within two weeks of the student returning to school. Work missed for reasons of truancy may not be made up.

Should a student be habitually absent and disregard his

school work then the teacher or principal is expected to inform the student and parents of his attendance obligations. Any continuation of truancy will result in a loss of course credits. If a student is absent for three consecutive days without a justifiable reason then the student is suspended from class pending a conference with the principal and the counsellor.

The above policy has been credited with reducing absences and increasing attendance through positive reinforcement, that is making each student feel involved in his own education. The policy is also regarded by its sponsors as flexible enough to satisfy those parents who prefer the traditional approach.

The tied credit-attendance policy adopted by North High School, Omaha, Nebraska, is combined with a vocational counselling program.[8] One major reason for the introduction of this type of policy was a growing attitude among many of the students that it was not necessary to attend school five days a week. A second factor was a reluctance on the part of students to attend school which resulted in a reduction in morale and an increase in vandalism.

The attendance policy which was designed after consultation with teachers, parents, and students emphasizes a just and equal treatment and is based on an attendance merit system. More specifically, any student who has less than two and one-half absences per semester, and fewer than six lates are excused from all final examinations unless he or she is encountering some difficulties in class. Eligible students are permitted to check out and leave the building after their last day before the final exam. With the introduction of this policy, the administration attempted to clarify for the students the reasons for emphasizing attendance. In addition, it

was pointed out that the students should prepare themselves for the working world by taking on the responsibility for their own regular attendance. To assist in this matter the vocational counselling program attempted to assist by providing them with an opportunity to become acquainted with the requirements of jobs either through consultation with the counsellor or by means of on-site experience. The more senior students were also given vocational counselling by outside agencies as well as the school counsellor.

This combination of tied credit and vocational counselling was considered successful in reducing tardiness and absences. Within a two year period tardiness was reduced by 50 per cent and absenteeism by 25 per cent. In addition, withdrawal rates from school decreased and improvements in academic achievement were observed. The success of the project may be attested to by the fact that among the teachers, attendance problems dropped from the second most important problem to the sixth with the introduction of the policy.

The plan adopted by the schools in Las Cruces, New Mexico, was patterned after that of Ferndale High School, Michigan[9]. Prior to 1974-75, the two senior high schools in Las Cruces required some communication from parents to determine whether student absences were legitimate. This particular aspect of the policy was not popular with many parents. In addition, the schools found that the procedures for the handling of attendance were time consuming and expensive. In order to overcome these disadvantages a new attendance plan was proposed and adopted for 1974-75. The updated policy placed the major responsibility for attendance on both students and parents by allowing 10 days of 'sick leave' each semester which a student could use as he pleased, in addition to the regular holidays. The school did

not attempt to determine how the 'sick leave' was used. However, after a student had used three or six days of 'sick leave' the school sent a report of this fact to the parents leaving the student to explain the absences to his or her parents. If the allowable 10 days of absence were exceeded then the student could forfeit course credits. Lates were also included with absences on the basis of a ratio of 3-1. Provisions did exist whereby the allowable number of days absent could be extended if there were extenuating circumstances. An incentive was also provided for students who were absent from classes fewer than four times during the semester. This reward took the form of being excused from final examinations provided that the teachers gave approval and the student was not encountering any difficulties in the courses.

With the introduction of this new attendance policy, the average attendance in the two schools rose from 90.05 per cent in 1973-74 to 95.62 per cent in 1974-75. On the basis of a school year of 180 days, average student absences declined from 17.9 days per student per year to 7.9 days per student. Most students approved the plan because they felt that they were mature enough to accept the responsibility for their own attendance in school.

An attendance plan similar to that employed in the Las Cruces Schools, was implemented at Napa High School, California[10] in 1975. This plan provided for 12 days per semester which could be applied to illness, appointments and family problems. After the thirteenth absence, students risked forfeiture of credit if the absences were not justifiable. In this plan, three tardies were counted as one absence. Forms completed by the teacher indicating the date of absence were sent home after the fourth, eighth and twelfth absence, by the attendance office with copies to the appropriate staff. After the fourth

absence a student would be counselled by a teacher and after the eighth or twelfth absence counselling would be undertaken by the teacher and a counsellor or school administrator. In addition to sending a letter after the eighth absence personal contact would be made by the teacher with the parents, usually by phone. If the 'sick leave' were used up then a student or parent could request a review board, comprising of administration, counselling and faculty, to consider any extenuating circumstances, and to place the student on a probationary basis. Parents would be notified of the review board's decision in writing.

This plan, during its first year of operation, was credited with reducing absences by approximately fifty per cent from an average of approximately nine per cent in 1972-75 to 4.5 per cent in 1975-76.

The Open Campus

The introduction of the "open campus" climate has apparently resulted in improved attendance, academic achievement and student discipline in a number of schools in which it has been tried. The implicit principle of this approach is that while students are expected to attend scheduled classes the school should not hold them accountable for the use of other school time. For example, the Bell Fourche High School[11] did not attempt to regulate student free time although at the introduction of an open campus policy distraction caused by noise in the halls did become a major problem. This particular matter was resolved by making provisions for a student lounge which was financed and supervised by the students. According to Graslie this type of policy not only enhanced attendance and reduced class-skipping but also improved discipline. He also observed that after the initial period of new found freedom more and more students were going to the

library and resource centre rather than to the lounge. Unfortunately, no quantitative data about the improvement in attendance, behavicur by age group, nor the socio-economic environment, is available. A less liberal open campus policy than that of the Bell Fourche School is also credited with improving attendance and fostering student discipline at Harriton High, Merion, Pennsylvania.[12] In this version of the open campus, senior high school students were required to attend five assigned classes per day on a regular basis. Any exceptions had to be approved by the principal. The following provisions were made for students who had some non-instructional time: a study hall; access to recreation facilities; use of resource area for research and study. The students were free to use their non-instructional time in any of the facilities provided. Such privileges could be forfeited by withdrawal of privileges if a student failed in one major or two minor subjects in the preceding quarter; failed to attend classes regularly; or if the right was withdrawn by parents.

Class-cutting and unexcused absences were not permitted. Should a student be absent without justification then open campus privileges were removed for a period of nine weeks and the students' parents were notified. After a second illegal absence open campus privileges were removed for the rest of the year. Any student who was absent for three days without acceptable justification was suspended for three days, and the parents were required to apply for their child's reinstatement into the school.

Team Approach

Some individuals believe that absenteeism is not the consequence of any single cause but results from a complexity of factors. Therefore, any solution to this problem will by necessity be compre-

hensive and require the help of a team of specialists. An experiment conducted by the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA)[13] to combat truancy was based upon the coordination of several school and social services which may have contact with truants or potential truants: the plan required that parents inform the school immediately if their child is absent. In turn the school reciprocated by letting parents know when their child was absent with no good reason. Arrangements were also made whereby all returning students were seen personally by a teacher. In the case of persistant poor attenders, an education welfare officer would visit the home and at the same time social workers would participate by working with regular truants in an effort to convince them to return to school. Other youth workers would be called upon to report on teenagers who turned up at social clubs when they should be at school and doctors were requested to excuse children from school attendance only when they were truly incapable of attending school. The police were also involved by monitoring students who were absent from school during school hours.

In addition the ILEA provided part-time and full-time teaching help together with financial assistance in order to establish informal education centres in the city. The purpose of these centres was to assist students by easing their re-entry into school over an extended time period. In some cases, truants were given daily individual tuition at the school they attended. These sessions were carried out in an extremely informal manner.[14] Unfortunately, no indication is provided of the level of success in this project.

Summary

On the basis of the preceding examples it would appear that a number of alternative ways with which to deal with absenteeism are

available to schools and school boards. However, there is one major reservation: although the literature indicates that these plans were successful, the writers did not always provide data on the level of improvement of student attendance. Even where such data are provided, there does not appear to be any followup studies. As a consequence, one must be concerned whether attendance recedes after the novelty of such programs wears off.

8 Summary of the Study

This study examines six issues related to student absenteeism in the Ontario school system. The six issues are: 1) the present levels and patterns of school attendance; 2) the relationship between patterns of school attendance and selected variables; 3) the general characteristics of persistent poor attenders; 4) the relationship between poor attendance and dropping out; 5) local board policies with respect to attendance; and 6) procedures presently employed to monitor patterns of school attendance.

Attendance problems have been of particular concern in United States and the United Kingdom in recent years, and the research literature on school attendance has grown rapidly. The purpose of this study is to provide baseline data on the issues under investigation, thus providing a reference point for future investigations into the question of attendance and absenteeism in Ontario.

I RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To carry out the study, twenty-four elementary and secondary schools were selected according to pre-determined criteria: location, school size, school system size, type of school, and type of program. Within each school, a sample of poor attenders were identified. In elementary schools, only Grade 7 and 8 students were included, as attendance was not perceived to be a problem in Grades K-6.

Four instruments were employed to gather the necessary data. These were: 1) a student absentee form on which data regarding absenteeism was gathered from school records; 2) a questionnaire on school attendance which gathered factual and perceptual data from good attenders, poor attenders, and teachers; 3) a request for

policies dealing with absenteeism, which was used to gather written policy statements from the local school boards where schools were involved in the research, as well as an additional sample of boards; and 4) an interview schedule which was used to gather details from school level personnel on school procedures and environment.

Four research teams, each consisting of two research assistants, shared the task of visiting each of the cooperating schools and collecting necessary data by means of the instruments provided. In the case of board policies, directors or school attendance counsellors were contacted by mail.

The data were converted to machine readable form, where possible, and edited to enable the investigation of the patterns of absenteeism of groups within the school, and patterns of absenteeism among students were identified independently for each school.

Every attempt was made to ensure anonymity with regard to the schools, students and teachers involved. As the study is descriptive in nature, the findings should not be used for predictive purposes.

II FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings in this study reveal some considerable variations in patterns of attendance and the perceptions held by students and teachers on such matters as school satisfaction; absenteeism; and class-skipping. Although this may be taken as an indication that there are no clear cut procedures to deal with these matters, some general patterns can be detected which may provide the basis for the development of alternative strategies to combat absenteeism and class-skipping.

Levels and Patterns of Absenteeism

While absenteeism in Ontario schools has not reached the levels experienced in some United States schools there is a natural concern that the patterns of attendance evidenced in the United States will eventually be replicated in Canada. Therefore, it is important to be aware of present levels of absenteeism in Ontario schools. According to the data collected in this study the level of absenteeism does differ between elementary and secondary schools. While the level of absenteeism for all of the schools included in this study is approximately eight per cent, the levels of absenteeism for elementary and secondary schools are 5.5 per cent and 9.0 per cent respectively.

In the case of secondary schools it was observed that the level of absenteeism in the schools with an academic emphasis was the lowest. Although the level of absenteeism in comprehensive high schools was lower than that for vocational schools it was somewhat higher than the level of absenteeism encountered in academic secondary schools. No particular difference between levels of absenteeism of male and female students could be determined.

Inspection of the data revealed no patterns in the levels of absenteeism among the groups of schools based on the characteristics used to design the sample, except for those grouped by level and type as described above.

Patterns of Absenteeism in Schools

Weekly patterns of absenteeism were investigated by considering the pair of days on which the highest numbers of absences were recorded during each week. These patterns were investigated for a number of groups of students in each school, namely: all

boys, all girls, all students, and students in each grade level. Weekly patterns of absenteeism for each of these groups were inspected for three time-periods: before the Christmas vacation, after the Christmas vacation and for the whole school year. This review was limited to those group/time-period combinations where the number of weeks with at least four days on which absences were recorded constituted at least half of the calendar weeks during each particular time period.

The first pattern of interest considered for each school was the day or days of the week on which the maximum number of absences was most often recorded for all students throughout the school year. For a pattern to be considered significant, a given day of the week must have occurred as the day of maximum absenteeism in at least thirty per cent of the weeks included in the analysis for the school year. Thus, it is possible that more than one day in the week may exceed the criterion. Friday was identified as a significant day of maximum absenteeism in each of twenty-one of the twenty-four sample schools. In addition, the criterion was exceeded for Monday in eleven of the above twenty-one schools. Friday and Monday occurred equally in all elementary and academic secondary schools. Thus, one is led to the following conclusion: 1) Friday is the day of the week on which maximum absenteeism occurs in secondary schools; and 2) maximum absenteeism in elementary schools occurs on both Friday and Monday.

Additional analysis was undertaken for each school to determine whether: 1) a particular day of maximum absenteeism was common among grade level groups; and 2) a particular day of maximum absenteeism was common to the periods before and after the Christmas vacation. The same day of the week occurred as the day of maximum absenteeism

in nine of the twenty-four sample schools. This leads to the conclusion that the day of the week on which the maximum number of absences in the week was most often recorded over the school year, was different among the grade levels.

An analysis of the day of the week on which the weekly maximum number of absences was most often recorded for the time-periods before and after the Christmas vacation revealed differences for at least a third of the groups within five elementary and four secondary schools. In the remaining schools no significant differences were observed. Therefore, in conclusion one may state that the day of the week on which the weekly maximum number of absences was recorded before and after the Christmas vacation is different for the majority of elementary schools but similar for most secondary schools. However, the day of the week on which maximum absenteeism occurred was not common among the schools.

The final school absentee pattern reviewed was the sequence of the days of the week when arranged in descending order of the number of absences recorded for each grade for the school year and the periods before and after the Christmas vacation. For such a pattern to be considered significant for a given group/time-period combination, a given ordered pair of days of maximum absenteeism must have occurred in at least thirty per cent of the weeks in the time period under consideration. In only one school were significant pairs of days observed for more than a third of the group/time-period combinations included in the analysis for that school, although at least one significant ordered pair of days occurred in each of twenty schools. This limited number of significant pairs of days leads one to conclude that no distinctive sequence of days of absen-

teeism exists among sample schools.

Further inspection of the data also revealed no evidence of patterns of absenteeism among the schools when classified according to the characteristics used to select the sample schools (see Table 1:1). The only exception to this statement is the patterns of absenteeism between elementary and secondary schools as described above.

Patterns of Absenteeism Among Students

Patterns of absenteeism among students with differing levels of absenteeism in each school were also investigated by considering days on which such students were most often absent during the school year. These particular patterns differ from the previous ones in that school patterns do not take into account patterns of absenteeism which are common to individual students. Since some differences of absenteeism patterns could emerge for types of students which might be different to the patterns of absenteeism in schools it was considered appropriate to examine:

1. the day of the week on which each student was most often absent; and
2. the pair of days of maximum absenteeism, arranged in descending order of the number of absences, on which each student was most often absent.

Since it was not possible to use a case study approach with each student, individual patterns of absenteeism were investigated within the following groups: 1) those individuals with more than ten absences in the school year; 2) those with eleven to twenty absences; 3) those with twenty-one to forty; and 4) those with more than forty absences in each school. For a day or pair of days of the week to constitute a significant pattern of absenteeism, that

day or pair must have occurred at least thirty or ten per cent, respectively, of the students in each group.

In only three of the actual sixty seven groups of students included did any particular day of the week occur as the day of maximum absenteeism for more than the criterion value of thirty per cent of the students in a group. Furthermore, of the sixty seven groups, in only thirteen did the number of ordered pairs, of the two days of maximum absenteeism, meet or exceed the criterion of ten per cent of the students in a group. In both analyses, no particular day or pair of days of maximum absenteeism was found to be common among the groups. Consequently, one can conclude that the likelihood of a student with more than ten absences in the school year being absent more often on one day of the week than another is very low. Further, no significant differences were observed among the sub-groups of students with different levels of absenteeism over the school year. When these data were inspected on the basis of the characteristics used in selecting the sample schools no consistent patterns of student absenteeism were found.

Dropouts and School Attendance

On the basis of attendance data collected in the sample of secondary schools for this study there is no indication that dropouts might be detected by their pattern of school attendance. What these findings do highlight however, is that the problem of dropout is a complex one. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that any single factor can be used as a predictor of such students. In fact, there is support in other studies for the need to assess a variety of indicators for the purpose of predicting dropouts.

Characteristics of Good and Poor Attenders

As part of this study, data were gathered in order to assess whether poor school attenders were characteristically different from good attenders. In this regard, it is of particular interest to note that a number of studies have already attempted to determine some of the characteristics of truants. However, in these studies no comparisons were made with good attenders. If no such comparison had been undertaken in this study it is highly likely that the conclusions to be drawn from the analysis of the data would have been far different from the ones presented below.

This viewpoint is reinforced by the fact that while differences do emerge between poor and good attenders in the responses to the questionnaire, the differences in many cases are not substantial. This observation is particularly evident when one compares the family background of both intermediate and secondary school students. None of the factors employed to assess family background of the students provided any highly significant differences among good and poor attenders.

Some consistent differences were observed with respect to satisfaction with school and school work. The level of satisfaction, on the basis of the indices employed, indicated that poor attenders are somewhat less satisfied than good attenders. In addition, male students tend to be slightly more satisfied than female students, regardless of whether they were poor or good attenders. What is of particular interest, however, is that teachers perceive a higher level of satisfaction among their students than the students themselves reported.

When perceptions of teachers and students with respect to

absenteeism and class-skipping are examined a number of conclusions can be made. Perhaps the most significant conclusion is that none of the respondents are particularly supportive of the effectiveness of present measures to limit truancy and class-skipping. Moreover, while teachers exhibit a greater confidence in present procedures, poor attenders overwhelmingly feel they are quite ineffective. This criticism is most important particularly when the respondents feel that parents, teachers and administrators are truly concerned about such matters.

While sickness is probably the most common legitimate reason for being absent it is evident that students are away from school for a variety of other reasons. It would appear from this study that the major reasons for students not coming to school are because they are not experiencing success in their school work or that the school does not seem relevant to their particular interests. Bad weather or problems at home do not appear to students or teachers to be significant reasons for absenteeism.

It is of particular interest to note how different respondent groups view the level of absenteeism and class-skipping in their schools. Far more poor attenders view absenteeism and class-skipping as above average than either teachers or good attenders. In turn, teachers consider these problems less serious than good attenders. It would therefore appear that poor attenders tend to view the various aspects of absenteeism and class-skipping as more serious than the other responding groups.

The more negative attitudes of poor attenders towards absenteeism and class-skipping may be a consequence of the students with whom they associate. It is most likely that poor attenders

will have more in common with other poor attenders. Consequently, their opinions on such matters as the effectiveness of measures to limit truancy will be coloured by the fact that most of their associates are truants. In the case of good attenders, one would expect their viewpoint on such issues to be more positive since they will tend to associate with other good attenders. However, they may well be more aware of truants than are the teachers.

According to this study it is not possible to develop a particular stereotype of the poor attender. Not only do poor attenders exist in all grade levels and at all ages but they are to be found in all programs. Moreover, no significant distinction can be made between good and poor attenders on the basis of home background; origin of parents or location of home. Perhaps the only distinguishing characteristics of these two types of students relate to their satisfaction with school. More specifically, poor attenders indicated a lower level of satisfaction than did good attenders.

School Board Attendance Policies

The survey and analysis of attendance policies suggests that local school boards have generally not been active in the area of regulating student absenteeism. This would suggest that boards either do not perceive student absenteeism as a serious issue or else they are satisfied with the procedures presently in effect to monitor and counteract absenteeism within their jurisdictions.

On the basis of this study it would appear that current efforts to limit absenteeism at the board level are generally conducted on an informal basis. A major part of the decision-making and judgemental responsibility appears to rest upon the shoulders

of principals without the support of well developed school board attendance regulations.

It would appear that most of the school board policies reviewed, as well as many of the procedures developed in individual schools, are concerned with the levels of absenteeism rather than with procedures to limit absenteeism. This approach perhaps, reflects the interpretation given to the sections of the Education Act and the Ministry of Education regulations concerning absenteeism.

Improving School Attendance

The most common feature of recording school absenteeism is the highly centralized approach that is taken. In all of the schools visited, it was common for absences to be reported to the main office so that parents and teachers might be informed of such absences. Perhaps the only difference of significance is the manner of reporting to the main office. In some cases a class list is used, in others a computer card, while others employ quick sort cards. The success of such procedures depends primarily on the cooperation of teachers. In fact, whatever procedure is developed to monitor attendance it will inevitably depend upon the willing cooperation of many individuals. If that cooperation is not available, then any procedure no matter how well detailed, will be ineffective.

A significant proportion of the teachers responding to the questionnaire were of the opinion that school attendance might be improved by better enforcement of existing sanctions or the introduction of new sanctions. However, the review of attempts to improve school attendance in the United States and the United Kingdom tend to be related with programs designed to improve attitudes towards school and the development or improvement of learning skills.

The review of alternative approaches used to deal with poor attenders permitted the development of five categories of approaches. These are: 1) use of student contracts; 2) development of home visit programs; 3) remediation; 4) tied credits; and 5) open campus. In most cases, the procedures developed are based upon the assumption that the student must be assisted in dealing with difficulties in the school or home environments which are affecting his performance in schooi. Thus, attempts are made to relate school attendance with school performance.

Some educators in the United Kirgdom are of the opinion that absenteeism is the consequence of a number of complex factors. Therefore, any approach to this problem must take into account such complexities and employ a team of specialists. While this approach has been undertaken as an experiment no indication of its level of success is available.

In part, the dissatisfaction of poor attenders reported in this study further reinforces the need to take into account the attitudes and aptitudes of students who are classed as truants. While the programs alluded to earlier do consider these factors the use of sanctions is not precluded. What can be concluded, however, is that the use of sanctions alone will not necessarily assure the continued attendance and successful performance of a poor attender since such an approach essentially attacks the symptoms rather than the problem. In other words, absenteeism is in many cases a manifestation of some basic problem, most likely related with school performance. If attendance is to be improved over an extended period of time with a minimum of surveillance then any policy on truancy must recognize and provide direction for the resolution of the basic problem.

III IMPLICATIONS

While it is not within the terms of reference of this study to make recommendations regarding student attendance procedures the report would be incomplete without indicating some of the implications that can be drawn from the survey. However, it is important to realize that the following suggestions are not necessarily the only ones to be drawn from the study. In fact, the researchers have deliberately limited this section to a brief review of the more critical implications.

1) Although the average levels of absenteeism for the elementary and secondary schools included in the study are 5.5 per cent and 9.0 per cent respectively; some schools will exceed these values. In fact, the level of absenteeism of one secondary school exceeded twenty per cent. It is therefore important that within the near future serious consideration be given to monitoring the level of absenteeism in schools. However, before such an activity is undertaken some attempts should be made to establish an average level of absenteeism; bearing in mind that no attempt to limit truancy will ever be completlely effective.

   Since previous studies have suggested that about four and a half per cent of the student body will be absent due to sickness it is evident that an average level of absenteeism should not be less than this amount. Furthermore, since the opportunities to skip classes or be truant are perhaps greater in secondary schools than elementary schools then different average levels of absenteeism should be employed. To begin with, the average levels of absenteeism arrived at in this study might be appropriate.

2) In view of the number of schools in the province it is not possible nor desirable to monitor levels of absenteeism or patterns of absenteeism for all of them.

However, it is possible and would be most helpful in assessing trends in absenteeism to examine attendance in a sample of schools. This report provides details by which such a selection might be made and the procedures that could be followed in undertaking such a survey.

3) It would appear that truancy is not viewed as a high priority among school boards when one examines their policies. In many cases, board policies are a restatement of the sections of the Education Act dealing with absenteeism. If the province is to be proactive in this matter then the Ministry of Education should re-consider their present policy on absenteeism in order to encourage boards to counteract truancy before it reaches the proportions experienced in the United States. Any such change in policy should take into consideration the need of school boards to assist habitual truants in their return to school. In addition, such policies should recognize that truancy is a far more significant problem in secondary schools than elementary schools.

4) The reasons for students dropping out of school are many and varied and do not necessarily coincide with those of the habitual truant. Consequently, it is not possible nor advisable to attempt to predict potential drop outs solely on their attendance performance.

5) Absenteeism has been of concern to educators in this province for many years but the attempts to deal with the problem have been in large part, limited to the employment of a wide range of sanctions in order to have students return to school. Unfortunately, these techniques do not ensure that such students are taking full advantage of the benefits provided by the school. As educators, we must recognize that merely attaining attendance of poor attenders is not the complete solution to truancy. As was mentioned earlier, absence

from school may quite often be the symptom of some deep rooted problems.

It would therefore appear that if some inroads are to be made in the problems of truancy, educators must undertake a change of attitude with respect to poor attendance. The need for such a change is reinforced by the overwhelming opinion of both students and teachers that present procedures to limit absenteeism and class-skipping are not effective. What educators should recognize is that absenteeism often reflects some dissatisfaction of the student with respect to school work, or their own abilities, or in their home. The longer a student is absent from school the greater is the likelihood of this dissatisfaction increasing. If such a student is required to return to school without some remedial help then it is doubtful, in a number of cases, whether such an action will be worthwhile in terms of the educational benefits to be gained by the student.

Therefore, before any concrete action in terms of providing remedial help for truants can be undertaken in an effective and committed manner, some change of attitude on the part of those dealing with truants must be evident. Until this change occurs, it is doubtful whether effective policies to deal with this matter will be instituted by school boards. In essence, what is called for is a re-education of educators about the problems of poor attenders.

Conclusion

The purpose of this project was to undertake a baseline study of absenteeism in Ontario. Our findings suggest that absenteeism has not been viewed as a critical issue among school boards with the result that principals have been given the major responsibility in dealing with absenteeism. Since absenteeism has not been

a dominant issue in the province, the major activity in this area has been primarily one of monitoring absenteeism and enforcing students to return to school. Little or no evidence was found that much was being done in the way of remedial help to assist such students in returning to school.

However, if absenteeism does begin to increase then serious consideration should be given to providing remedial programs for truants. In order that schools may be alerted to the problems of absenteeism it would be helpful if the Regional Offices of the Ministry of Education were to monitor levels of attendance in different types of schools. These attendance levels could be made known to all the schools in the region for comparative purposes. In this way, principals could assess the seriousness of absenteeism within their own schools relative to the data provided by the Regional Office.

Although there is a need to review the approach taken with poor attenders it is not possible to point out any particular distinguishing characteristics of these students. While this study has indicated that in general, poor attenders are not satisfied with school it is not possible to make such a statement about an individual poor attender. As a consequence, one must try to avoid developing a stereotype of the poor attender.

In a number of ways the issue of the poor attender parallels that of the drop out. The reasons for poor attandance are extensive and complex. While it is relatively easy to determine the level of absenteeism of poor attenders it is significantly more difficult to assist such students in achieving a consistent attendance in school which is to their benefit.

REFERENCES

CHAPTER 1

1. Tyerman, B.J. Truancy, University Press, London, 1968.

2. Davis, D. 'One Solution to the Inner City Attendance Problem', Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 56, No. 8, April, 1975, p.560.

3. Levanto, J. "The Problem of Attendance: Research Findings and Solutions", address given at the 59th Annual Convention of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1975; and

   Kohler, L.T. "The Student Absentee", John Hopkins University, February, 1976.

4. Galloway, D. "Size of Schools, Socio-economic Hardship, Suspension Rates and Persistent Unjustified Absence from School', British Journal of Educational Psychology, No. 46, 1976, pp. 40-47. See also Galloway, D. 'Persistent Unjustified Absence from School', Trends in Education, December, 1976, pp. 22-27.

5. Karweit, N.L. Rainy Days and Mondays: An Analysis of Factors Related to Absence from Schools, Center for Social Organization of Schools, John Hopkins University, Maryland, 1973. Report No. 162.

6. Mitchell, S. and Shepherd, M. 'The Child Who Dislikes Going to School', British Journal of Educational Psychology, Vol. 37, Part 1, February, 1967.

7. Galloway, op. cit.

8. Kohler, op. cit.

9. Tyerman, op. cit.

10. Stinger, L.A. 'Children at Risk: The Unready for School', Elementary School Journal, Vol. 73, No. 7, April, 1973, pp. 364-373.

11. Karweit, op. cit.

12. Kohler, op. cit.

13. Kohler, op. cit.

14. Karweit, op. cit.

15. Globe and Mail, May 13, 1978, p.4.

16. Burt, C. The Young Delinquent, University Press, London, 1944. Cited in May, D. 'Truancy, School Absenteeism and Delinquency.'

CHAPTER I

17. Manheim, 1965. Cited in Tennent, T.D. 'School Non-Attendance and Delinquency'.

18. Tennent, T.G. 'School Non-Attendance and Delinquency', Educational Research, Vol. 13, No. 3, June, 1971, pp. 185-190.

19. May, D. 'Truancy School Absenteeism and Delinquency', Scottish Educational Studies, Vol. 7, No. 2, November, 1975, pp.97-108.

20. Ibid.

21. Levanto, op. cit.

22. Galloway, op. cit.

23. North West Regional Society of Education Officers, unpublished report, 1971. Cited in Tyerman, op. cit.

24. Mitchell, S. 'The Absentees', Education in the North, Vol. 9, 1972, pp. 22-28.

25. Galloway, op. cit.

26. United Kingdom Department of Education and Science, "Results of School Absence Survey", press notice of 25 July 1974. Cited in Galloway, op. cit.

27. North West Regional Society of Education Officers, op. cit.

28. Sproule, A. 'Local Authority Experiment: London', Turner, B. editor, Truancy, London, 1974, publisher not named.

29. Sproule, op. cit.

30. Wheeler, K. and Wheeler, M. 'School Phobia', Instructor, May, 1974.

31. Galloway, op. cit.

32. Tyerman, op. cit.

33. Washington, R., Jr. 'A Survey Analysis of Problems Faced by Inner-City High School Students Who Have Been Classified as Truants', The High School Journal, Vol. 56, February, 1973, pp. 248-257.

34. Davis, op. cit.

35. Karweit, op. cit.

36. Levanto, op. cit.

37. Karweit, op. cit.

CHAPTER 1

38. Tyerman, op. cit.,p.12.

39. Galloway, op. cit.

40. Tyerman, op. cit.,p.12.

41. Wright, J.S. 'Factors in School Attendance', Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 58, No. 4, December, 1976, pp.358-359.

42. Karweit, op. cit.

43. Ziegler, C.W. School Attendance as a Factor in School Progress, Teacher's College, Columbia University, New York, 1928. Contributions to Education No. 297.

44. Galloway, op. cit.

45. Levanto, op. cit.

46. Galloway, op. cit.

47. Levanto, op. cit.

48. Levanto, op. cit.

49. Karweit, op. cit.

50. Ziegler, op. cit.

51. Karweit, op. cit.

52. Pringle, M.L.K., Butler, N.R., and Davie, R. 11,000 Seven Year Olds, Longman, London, 1966.

53. Levanto, op. cit.

54. Levanto, op. cit.

55. Tyerman, op. cit.

56. Levanto, op. cit.

57. Wright, op. cit.

58. Karweit, op. cit.

59. Ziegler, op. cit.

CHAPTER 3

1. Watson, Cicely, Focus on Dropouts, Toronto, O.I.S.E. 1976, pp. 59-110.

CHAPTER 4

1. Hackman, J.R. & Oldham, G.R. The Job Diagnostic Survey: An Instrument for the Diagnosis of Jobs and the Evaluation of Job Redesign Projects, (Technical Report, No. 4) New Haven, Conn. Yale University, Department of Administrative Sciences, 1974.

CHAPTER 7

1. B. David Brooks, "Contingency Contracts with Truants", The Personal and Guidance Journal, Vol. 52, No. 5 (January, 1974, pp. 316-319).

2. Ibid, pp. 319-320.

3. Edsel Erickson et al., Final Report of the Evaluation of the 1970-71 School-Home Contact Program (New York: New York City Board of Education, 1971).

4. Ralph T. Nelson, "Focus: An Alternative Model that Works", Phi Delta Kappan, LVI (May 1975), p. 631.

5. Shirley M. Sulack, "The Turnabout from Boredom to Interest", Phi Delta Kappan, LVI (May 1975), p. 630.

6. Berthold Demsch and Julia Garth, "A Multidisciplinary Approach to Truancy", Psychology in the Schools, VII (April 1970), pp. 194-197.

7. John R. Hoback, "The Problem of Attendance", NASSP Bulletin, Vol. 60, No. 397 (February 1976), pp. 20-29.

8. Dick Davis, "One Solution to the Inner City Attendance Problem", Phi Delta Kappen, LVI (April 1975), p. 560.

9. Edward Fernandez and Manuel Cardenas, "Absenteeism: Is There a Solution", NASSP Bulletin (November 1976), pp. 87-91.

10. Tom Fotinas, "Napa High School Attendance Policy: An Experiment to Reduce Unnessary School Absences", (Microfiche ED 119 353, September, 1975).

11. Louis Graslie, "Five Years of Open Campus", NASSP Bulletin, Vol. 51, No. 369 (January 1973), pp. 76-79.

12. James M. Sandercock, "The Development and Implementation of a Program of Open Campus", Practicum Report, Nova University (June 30, 1976). Microfiche ED 133 830.

13. Anna Sproule, "Local Authority Experiment: London", Truancy, ed. by Barry Turner (London, 1974).

14. Ibid, p. 107.

APPENDIX A

INSTRUMENTS USED FOR DATA COLLECTION

1A

FACULTY OF EDUCATION
DUNCAN McARTHUR HALL

Queen's University
Kingston, Canada
K7L 3N6

May 8, 1978

Dear

On behalf of the Ministry of Education, we are conducting a study of patterns of school attendance in Ontario elementary and secondary schools. You may be aware that your board has given approval for us to collect data in one or more schools in your board's jurisdiction.

An important part of the study calls for the review of any written policy statements and regulations regarding school attendance and absenteeism, which school boards may have established for general implementation in their jurisdictions. Could you assist us by sending us a copy of any current policy statements and regulations which your board may have relating to student absenteeism or class skipping.

While we hesitate to ask you to take on an additional task at this busy time of year, there is really no other way of obtaining the information that is vitally needed to help understand and clarify problems of attendance and absenteeism. Your assistance in this important project will be very much appreciated.

Yours truly,

LeRoy E. Whitehead, Ph.D.
Associate Investigator

LW:lf

2A

FACULTY OF EDUCATION
DUNCAN McARTHUR HALL

Queen's University
Kingston, Canada
K7L 3N6

Dear Parent,

A team from Queen's University is conducting a research project to study the Patterns of School Attendance in Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools. The project has been commissioned, and is funded, by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

We would like to find out what students think about school in general, school attendance, class-skipping, absenteeism, and how effective the present regulations regarding attendance and school attendance procedures are.

We are now writing to ask your permission for your son/daughter/ward to participate in our questionnaire survey. The questionnaire will take approximately 40 minutes (or less) to complete. We would also appreciate having your permission to look at any records of his/her past experience in school.

You may rest assured that all responses given by your son/daughter/ward to our questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential. No student will be identified by name or school, for this is not the purpose of the study.

We would greatly appreciate it if you could assist us by granting this request. We feel confident that this study will lead to further improvement in Ontario's educational system and for this reason your cooperation will be especially valued.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Sharples

Brian Sharples, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator

CONSENT FORM

PATTERNS OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IN

ONTARIO ELEMENTARY AND

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Principal Investigator: Brian Sharples, Ph.D.
Associate Professor & Chairman of
Educational Administration
Queen's University

I consent/do not consent to the participation of my son/daughter/ward_____(name) in the above-named project.

I understand that he/she will take part in a questionnaire survey to be administered by a member of the Queen's research team. The questionnaire will take approximately 40 minutes (or less) to complete. The researcher may/may not study my son's/daughter's/ward's school records.

My understanding is that all information will be kept strictly confidential.

Signed,

_____

(Parent or Guardian)

PATTERNS OF ATTENDANCE IN ONTARIO ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

This study is being undertaken by the Faculty of Education, Queen's University on behalf of the Ministry of Education. As part of the study we wish to find out what students think about school, student absenteeism, class-skipping, truancy and school work. Consequently your answers to the questions which follow will be most helpful.

All your answers will remain confidential and anonymous. No one will see the questionnaire except the researchers.

This questionnaire will take approximately 40 minutes. Read the General Instructions on the next page and wait for the signal to start.

ONTARIO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROJECT

O.S.A.P. school code..... 1 2

3 4 5

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Do not start answering before you are told to do so.
2. Answer every question to the best of your ability.
3. If in doubt ask for guidance by raising your hand.
4. Mark only one item for each question.

PART ONE

Instructions

In this section please answer the questions given below by writing the number of the answer you choose in the box provided in the right-hand column.

Here is an example:

Q: What city is the capital of the Province of Ontario?

A:
1. Kingston
2. Hamilton
3. Toronto
4. Thunder Bay

[3]

1. What is your sex?

1. Boy
2. Girl

[ ] 6

---

2. How old are you?

1. 12 years or less
2. 13 years
3. 14 years
4. 15 years
5. 16 years
6. 17 years
7. 18 years
8. 19 years or more

[ ] 7

---

3. In what grade are you taking most of your courses this year?

1. Grade 7
2. Grade 8

[ ] 8

---

4. Indicate in the box the school subject you like most.

1. English/Language Arts
2. Mathematics
3. Science
4. History or Geography
5. Music or Art
6. Physical Health Education
7. Home Economics/Workshop

[ ] 9

---

5. How well did you do in school last year?

1. Outstanding
2. Above average
3. Average
4. Below average
5. Poorly

[ ] 10

---

6. Indicate the type of place where you live.

1. city
2. town/village
3. rural (home in country)
4. farm

11

7. How do you usually travel to school?

1. walk
2. driven by parent
3. drive own car
4. school bus
5. public transit
6. other

12

8. Do you have a part-time job averaging 12 or more hours per week?

1. yes
2. no

13

9. With whom do you live?

1. Father and mother
2. Father only
3. Mother only
4. Guardians
5. Other than above

14

10. What is the total number of children in your family (including yourself).

1. one (yourself)
2. two (yourself and a brother or sister)
3. three (yourself and brothers or sisters)
4. four (yourself and brothers or sisters)
5. five or more (yourself and brothers or sisters)

15

11. What is the highest level of your father's (or male guardian's) education?

1. elementary school
2. high school
3. college or university
4. don't know

16

12. What is the highest level of your mother's (or female guardian's) education?

1. elementary school
2. high school
3. college or university
4. don't know

17

13. a) Do most of your teachers take attendance regularly in their subject classes?

1. Yes
2. No

18

b) Are you more likely to go to subject classes when the teacher takes attendance regularly?

1. Yes
2. No

19

14. a) Would your parents be concerned if they found out that you missed a school day without their permission?
1. Yes
2. No
[ ] 20

15. a) Do you think your teachers care whether students are absent?
1. Yes
2. No
[ ] 21

b) Are you more likely to go to classes in which teachers care about attendance?
1. Yes
2. No
[ ] 22

16. Do you think going to school will help you to get a good job later on?
1. Yes
2. No
[ ] 23

17. a) Would your parents be concerned if they found out that you skipped classes?
1. Yes
2. No
[ ] 24

b) Do you think teachers care whether students skip classes or not?
1. Yes
2. No
[ ] 25

18. a) Do you think school administrators care about class-skipping?
1. Yes
2. No
[ ] 26

b) Do you think your school administrators are concerned about absenteeism?
1. Yes
2. No
[ ] 27

19. a) Do you think the actions taken by the school to cut down on class skipping are effective?
1. Yes
2. No
[ ] 28

b) Do you think that the actions taken by your school to cut down on unexcused absences are effective?
1. Yes
2. No
[ ] 29

PART TWO

Instructions: In this section please note that the answers change from Yes-No. Read the questions carefully and write the number of the answer you choose in the box provided in the right hand column.

20. If nobody made you come to school, how often would you want to come anyway?

1. Never
2. Seldom
3. Often
4. Always

[ ] 30

---

21. Students stay away from school for a number of reasons. Below is a list of such reasons. Think of the students in your school. For each reason write in the box the number which represents how often it is the reason for absence from school.

1. Seldom
2. Sometimes
3. Often
4. Very Often

a. School is too boring ..... [ ] 31

b. School is not meeting needs ..... [ ] 32

c. Bad weather ..... [ ] 33

d. Just didn't want to come ..... [ ] 34

e. To avoid taking a test or exam ..... [ ] 35

f. Too sick to come ..... [ ] 36

g. Problems at home ..... [ ] 37

h. Going somewhere with friends ..... [ ] 38

i. Failing in school ..... [ ] 39

---

22. How would you rate the level of class-skipping in your school?

1. Low
2. Below average
3. Average
4. Average
5. Above average

[ ] 40

---

23. How would you rate the level of absenteeism in your school?

1. Low
2. Below average
3. Average
4. Above average
5. High

[ ] 41

---

24. Think of yourself. Which of the plans listed below best describes your own future plans? (Write number in box provided).

1. Go to university
2. Go to college of applied arts and technology
3. Take an apprentice program
4. Complete secondary school then obtain a job or work at home
5. Leave school as soon as possible
6. Other plans or undecided

☐ 42

25. Think of your school friends. Which of the plans listed below describes the plans of most of your school friends? (Enter number in the box provided).

1. Go to university
2. Go to college of applied arts and technology
3. Take an apprentice program
4. Complete secondary school then obtain a job or work at home
5. Leave school as soon as possible
6. Other plans or undecided

☐ 43

26. Think of your parents or guardians. Which of the following would they like you to do?

1. Go to university
2. Go to college of applied arts and technology
3. Take an apprentice program
4. Complete secondary school then obtain a job or work at home
5. Leave school as soon as possible
6. Other plans or undecided

☐ 44

PART THREE

Instructions: Each of the statements given below is something that a student might say about school and school work. Think of yourself, and indicate how much you agree with the following statements using the numbers of the scale shown.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Here is an example:

I often think of joining a band..... [4]

The number placed in the box means that the person agreed with the statement.

27. I feel good about myself when I do my school work well. [ ] 45

28. In general I find that the life of a student in this school is very satisfactory. [ ] 46

29. I feel a sense of personal satisfaction when I do my school work well. [ ] 47

30. School work is worthwhile to me. [ ] 48

31. I often think of quitting school. [ ] 49

32. I am generally satisfied with the kind of school work I am doing. [ ] 50

33. My own feelings are not generally affected by how well I do my school work. [ ] 51

34. Most of my school work seems useless or unimportant. [ ] 52

35. I feel bad and unhappy when I find that I have done my school work poorly. [ ] 53

Instructions: Now please think of the other students in your school. Using the scale given below indicate how much you agree with each of the following statements by entering the number which represents your answer in the box provided on the right.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Here is an example.

Most students in this school are a friendly bunch..... [5]

(The number placed in the box means that you agree very much with the statement.)

36. Most students in this school feel a great sense of personal satisfaction when they do their school work well. [ ] 54

37. Most students are very satisfied with this school. [ ] 55

38. Most students feel that school work is meaningless and unimportant. [ ] 56

39. Students at this school often think of quitting. [ ] 57

40. Most students at this school feel badly or unhappy when they find that they have done their school work poorly. [ ] 58

41. Most students find their school work to be worthwhile. [ ] 59

42. Instructions: Using the scale shown please indicate in the box provided on the right how much you think students would like to have the following:

1	2	3	4	5
A very small amount	a moderate amount	an average amount	a large amount	a very large amount

a) interesting and challenging work..... [ ] 60

b) Chances to try out your own ideas in school work..... [ ] 61

c) Opportunities to learn new things in school..... [ ] 62

d) A sense of accomplishing something worthwhile..... [ ] 63

e) Chances to use their imagination in my school work..... [ ] 64

f) Opportunities to develop and improve myself as a person..... [ ] 65

PART FIVE

Instructions: Please enter in your own words in the space alloted, the answer to the following questions.

43. In the space provided: please state the chief language spoken in your home. _____ 66 [ ][ ] 67

_____

44. What is the occupation of your parents or guardian? [ ] 68

1. Father/male guardian _____
2. Mother/female guardian _____ [ ] 69

_____

45. Please state the country of birth of 70 [ ][ ] 71

1. Your father _____
2. Your mother _____ 72 [ ][ ] 73

_____

46. If you were a teacher how many times would you allow a student to skip classes before you would consider it a serious problem? 74 [ ][ ] 75

_____

_____

_____

47. If you were a teacher, how many times would you allow a student to be absent from school before you would consider it a serious matter? 76 [ ][ ] 77

_____

_____

_____

78 [ ][ ] 79

Thank you

PATTERNS OF ATTENDANCE IN ONTARIO ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

This study is being undertaken by the Faculty of Education, Queen's University on behalf of the Ministry of Education. As part of the study we wish to find out what students think about school, student absenteeism, class-skipping, truancy and school work. Consequently your answers to the questions which follow will be most helpful.

All your answers will remain confidential and anonymous. No one will see the questionnaire except the researchers.

This questionnaire will take approximately 40 minutes. Read the General Instructions on the next page and wait for the signal to start.

ONTARIO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROJECT

O.S.A.P. school code .....

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Do not start answering before you are told to do so.
2. Answer every question to the best of your ability.
3. If in doubt ask for guidance by raising your hand.
4. Mark only one item for each question.

1 [redacted]

3 [redacted]

PART ONE

Instructions

In this section please answer the questions given below by writing the number of the answer you choose in the box provided in the right-hand column.

Here is an example:

Q: What city is the capital of the Province of Ontario?

A:
1. Kingston
2. Hamilton
3. Toronto
4. Thunder Bay

[3]

1. What is your sex?

1. Boy
2. Girl

[ ] 6

2. How old are you?

1. 12 years or less
2. 13 years
3. 14 years
4. 15 years
5. 16 years
6. 17 years
7. 18 years
8. 19 years or more

[ ] 7

3. In what grade are you taking most of your courses this year?

1. Grade 7
2. Grade 8
3. Grade 9 (Year 1)
4. Grade 10 (Year 2)
5. Grade 11 (Year 3)
6. Grade 12 (Year 4)
7. Grade 13 (Year 5)

[ ] 8

4. If in High School, at what level are you taking most of your courses this year?

1. Level Two or Three (occupational/vocational/basic)
2. Level Four (General)
3. Level Five or Six (Advanced)

[ ] 9

5. What was your overall average mark in school in June last year?

1. 80 - 100 (A)
2. 65 - 79 (B)
3. 50 - 64 (C)
4. 40 - 49 (D)
5. 0 - 39 (F)
6. Don't know

[ ] 10

6. Indicate the type of place where you live.

1. city
2. town/village
3. rural (home in country)
4. farm

11

7. How do you usually travel to school?

1. walk
2. driven by parent
3. drive own car
4. school bus
5. public transit
6. other

12

8. Do you have a part-time job averaging 12 or more hours per week?

1. yes
2. no

13

9. With whom do you live?

1. Father and mother
2. Father only
3. Mother only
4. Guardians
5. Other than above

14

10. What is the total number of children in your family (including yourself).

1. one (yourself)
2. two (yourself and a brother or sister)
3. three (yourself and brothers or sisters)
4. four (yourself and brothers or sisters)
5. five or more (yourself and brothers or sisters)

15

11. What is the highest level of your father's (or male guardian's) education?

1. elementary school
2. high school
3. college or university
4. don't know

16

12. What is the highest level of your mother's (or female guardian's) education?

1. elementary school
2. high school
3. college or university
4. don't know

17

13. a) Do most of your teachers take attendance regularly in their subject classes?

1. Yes
2. No

18

b) Are you more likely to go to subject classes when the teacher takes attendance regularly?

1. Yes
2. No

19

14. a) Would your parents be concerned if they found out that you missed a school day without their permission?
1. Yes
2. No
[ ] 20

15. a) Do you think your teachers care whether students are absent?
1. Yes
2. No
[ ] 21

b) Are you more likely to go to classes in which teachers care about attendance?
1. Yes
2. No
[ ] 22

16. Do you think going to school will help you to get a good job later on?
1. Yes
2. No
[ ] 23

17. a) Would your parents be concerned if they found out that you skipped classes?
1. Yes
2. No
[ ] 24

b) Do you think teachers care whether students skip classes or not?
1. Yes
2. No
[ ] 25

18. a) Do you think school administrators care about class-skipping?
1. Yes
2. No
[ ] 26

b) Do you think your school administrators are concerned about absenteeism?
1. Yes
2. No
[ ] 27

19. a) Do you think the actions taken by the school to cut down on class skipping are effective?
1. Yes
2. No
[ ] 28

b) Do you think that the actions taken by your school to cut down on unexcused absences are effective?
1. Yes
2. No
[ ] 29

PART TWO

Instructions: In this section please note that the answers change from Yes-No. Read the questions carefully and write the number of the answer you choose in the box provided in the right hand column.

20. If nobody made you come to school, how often would you want to come anyway?

1. Never
2. Seldom
3. Often
4. Always

[ ] 30

---

21. Students stay away from school for a number of reasons. Below is a list of such reasons. Think of the students in your school. For each reason write in the box the number which represents how often it is the reason for absence from school.

1. Seldom
2. Sometimes
3. Often
4. Very Often

a. School is too boring ..... [ ] 31

b. School is not meeting needs ..... [ ] 32

c. Bad weather ..... [ ] 33

d. Just didn't want to come ..... [ ] 34

e. To avoid taking a test or exam ..... [ ] 35

f. Too sick to come ..... [ ] 36

g. Problems at home ..... [ ] 37

h. Going somewhere with friends ..... [ ] 38

i. Failing in school ..... [ ] 39

---

22. How would you rate the level of class-skipping in your school?

1. Low
2. Below average
3. Average
4. Average
5. Above average

[ ] 40

---

23. How would you rate the level of absenteeism in your school?

1. Low
2. Below average
3. Average
4. Above average
5. High

[ ] 41

---

24. Think of yourself. Which of the plans listed below best describes your own future plans? (Write number in box provided).

    1. Go to university
    2. Go to college of applied arts and technology
    3. Take an apprentice program
    4. Complete secondary school then obtain a job or work at home
    5. Leave school as soon as possible
    6. Other plans or undecided

☐ 42

---

25. Think of your school friends. Which of the plans listed below describes the plans of most of your school friends? (Enter number in the box provided).

    1. Go to university
    2. Go to college of applied arts and technology
    3. Take an apprentice program
    4. Complete secondary school then obtain a job or work at home
    5. Leave school as soon as possible
    6. Other plans or undecided

☐ 43

---

26. Think of your parents or guardians. Which of the following would they like you to do?

    1. Go to university
    2. Go to college of applied arts and technology
    3. Take an apprentice program
    4. Complete secondary school then obtain a job or work at home
    5. Leave school as soon as possible
    6. Other plans or undecided

☐ 44

PART THREE

Instructions: Each of the statements given below is something that a student might say about school and school work. Think of yourself, and indicate how much you agree with the following statements using the numbers of the scale shown.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Here is an example:

I often think of joining a band..... [4]

The number placed in the box means that the person agreed with the statement.

27. I feel good about myself when I do my school work well. [ ] 45

28. In general I find that the life of a student in this school is very satisfactory. [ ] 46

29. I feel a sense of personal satisfaction when I do my school work well. [ ] 47

30. School work is worthwhile to me. [ ] 48

31. I often think of quitting school. [ ] 49

32. I am generally satisfied with the kind of school work I am doing. [ ] 50

33. My own feelings are not generally affected by how well I do my school work. [ ] 51

34. Most of my school work seems useless or unimportant. [ ] 52

35. I feel bad and unhappy when I find that I have done my school work poorly. [ ] 53

Instructions: Now please think of the other students in your school. Using the scale given below indicate how much you agree with each of the following statements by entering the number which represents your answer in the box provided on the right.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Here is an example.

Most students in this school are a friendly bunch..... [5]

(The number placed in the box means that you agree very much with the statement.)

36. Most students in this school feel a great sense of personal satisfaction when they do their school work well. [ ] 54

37. Most students are very satisfied with this school. [ ] 55

38. Most students feel that school work is meaningless and unimportant. [ ] 56

39. Students at this school often think of quitting. [ ] 57

40. Most students at this school feel badly or unhappy when they find that they have done their school work poorly. [ ] 58

41. Most students find their school work to be worthwhile. [ ] 59

42. Instructions: Using the scale shown please indicate in the box provided on the right how much you think students would like to have the following:

1	2	3	4	5
A very small amount	a moderate amount	a average amount	a large amount	a very large amount

a) interesting and challenging work..... [ ] 60

b) Chances to try out your own ideas in school work..... [ ] 61

c) Opportunities to learn new things in school..... [ ] 62

d) A sense of accomplishing something worthwhile..... [ ] 63

e) Chances to use their imagination in my school work..... [ ] 64

f) Opportunities to develop and improve myself as a person..... [ ] 65

PART FIVE

Instructions: Please enter in your own words in the space alloted, the answer to the following questions.

43. In the space provided: please state the chief language spoken in your home. _____ 66 [ ][ ] 67

_____

44. What is the occupation of your parents or guardian? [ ] 68

1. Father/male guardian _____
2. Mother/female guardian _____ [ ] 69

_____

45. Please state the country of birth of 70 [ ][ ] 71

1. Your father _____
2. Your mother _____ 72 [ ][ ] 73

_____

46. If you were a teacher how many times would you allow a student to skip classes before you would consider it a serious problem? 74 [ ][ ] 75

_____

_____

_____

47. If you were a teacher, how many times would you allow a student to be absent from school before you would consider it a serious matter? 76 [ ][ ] 77

_____

_____

_____

78 [ ][ ] 79

Thank you

PATTERNS OF ATTENDANCE IN ONTARIO ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS SURVEY

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

This study is being undertaken by the Faculty of Education, Queen's University on behalf of the Ministry of Education. As part of the study we wish to find out what teachers think about student absenteeism, class-skipping and truancy and to obtain your suggestions for dealing with these problems. We also wish to get your views on the present recording of attendance and follow-up procedures and your suggestions for their improvement. Consequently your responses to the questions will be most helpful, and your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

All the responses will remain confidential and the respondents will remain anonymous.

When you have completed the instrument, seal it in the accompanying envelope and deposit it in the box marked Queen's University (Teacher Questionnaire) in the General Office. The envelopes will be collected by our Research Assistant in your school.

ONTARIO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROJECT

Teacher Questionnaire

OSAP School Code [ ][ ] (1 2)

PART ONE

Instructions: Think of your school only. Please answer the following questions by entering the number which represent your choice of answer in the box provided.

1. a) Would the parents of your students be concerned if they found out that their son or daughter missed a school day without their permission.
   1. Yes
   2. No
   [ ] (5)

---

2. a) Do most teachers in your school care whether students are absent?
   1. Yes
   2. No
   [ ] (6)

---

   b) Do you think students are more likely to go to the classes in which teachers care about attendance?
   1. Yes
   2. No
   [ ] (7)

---

3. Are the rules and regulations concerning attendance and class-skipping well known by students?
   1. Yes
   2. No
   [ ] (8)

---

4. a) In general would the parents of your students be concerned if they found out that their son or daughter skipped classes?
   1. Yes
   2. No
   [ ] (9)

---

   b) Do most teachers in your school care whether students skip classes?
   1. Yes
   2. No
   [ ] (10)

---

5. a) Do you think your school administrators care about class-skipping?
   1. Yes
   2. No
   [ ] (11)

---

5. b) Do you think your school administrators care about student absenteeism?

1. Yes
2. No

☐ 12

---

6. a) Do you think that the actions taken by your school to cut down on class-skipping are effective?

1. Yes
2. No

☐ 13

---

b) Do you think that the actions taken by your school to cut down on unexcused absences are effective?

1. Yes
2. No

☐ 14

---

7. Do you think going to school will help your students to obtain a good job later on?

1. Yes
2. No

☐ 15

---

8. If nobody made students come to school, how often do you think they would <u>want</u> to come anyway?

1. Never
2. Seldom
3. Often
4. Always

☐ 16

---

9. Students stay away from school for a number of reasons. Think of the students at your school. For each reason stated below write in the box the number which represents <u>how often</u> it is the reason for absence from school.

1. Seldom
2. Sometimes
3. Often
4. Very often

a) School is too boring..... ☐ 17

b) School is not meeting needs..... ☐ 18

c) Bad weather..... ☐ 19

d) Just didn't want to come..... ☐ 20

e) To avoid taking a test or exam..... ☐ 21

f) Too sick to come..... ☐ 22

g) Problems at home..... ☐ 23

h) Going somewhere with friends..... ☐ 24

i) Failing in school..... ☐ 25

---

10. How would you rate the level of class-skipping in your school?

1. Low
2. Below average
3. Average
4. High
5. Very high

☐ 26

---

11. How would you rate the level of absenteeism in your school?

1. Low
2. Below average
3. Average
4. High
5. Very high

☐ 27

Instructions: Each of the statements below says something about students' feelings toward school and school work. Think of students in your school. Using the scale shown indicate the number which represents your choice of answer in the box provided.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

12. Students feel good about themselves when they do their school work well. ☐ 28

13. Generally speaking, the life of a student in this school is very satisfactory. ☐ 29

14. To students most school work seems useless or unimportant. ☐ 30

15. Students often talk of quitting school. ☐ 31

16. Students are generally satisfied with the kind of class work they do. ☐ 32

17. Students feelings generally are not effected by how well they do school work. ☐ 33

18. Most students in this school feel a great sense of personal satisfaction when they do their school work well. ☐ 34

19. Most students are very satisfied with this school. ☐ 35

20. Most students feel that school work is meaningless and unimportant. ☐ 36

21. Most students at this school feel badly or unhappy when they find out that they have done their school work poorly. ☐ 37

22. Most students find their school work to be very meaningful. ☐ 38

---

23. Using the scoring system shown indicate in the boxes provided how much you think students would like to have a) through f) below.

1	2	3	4	5
A very small amount	a moderate amount	an average amount	a large amount	a very large amount

a) Interesting and challenging work..... ☐ 39

b) Chances to try out their own ideas in school work..... ☐ 40

c) Opportunities to learn new things..... ☐ 41

d) A sense of accomplishing something worthwhile..... ☐ 42

e) Chances to use their imagination in school work..... ☐ 43

f) Opportunities to develop and improve himself/herself as a person..... ☐ 44

28A

PART THREE

Instructions: In this section we wish to obtain your perceptions of the adequacy of the recording of absenteeism and tracking of students, and your suggestions for improving these school procedures. Write your comments in the space provided.

24. Indicate the extent to which you think that school attendance registers accurately reflect total absenteeism from school. ☐ 45

25. a) How many times could a student skip your classes before you would consider it a serious matter? ☐☐ 46 47

b) How many days could a student be absent from school before you would consider it a serious matter? ☐☐ 48 49

26. a) What are your suggestions for reducing class-skipping in your school?

b) What suggestions do you have for reducing student absenteeism in your school?

27. What are your suggestions for the improvement of the recording of attendance and follow up procedures?

28. What suggestion do you have for the improvement of the recording of class-skipping and follow up procedures?

Thank you

PATTERNS OF ATTENDANCE IN ONTARIO ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS SURVEY

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

This study is being undertaken by the Faculty of Education, Queen's University on behalf of the Ministry of Education. As part of the study we wish to find out what teachers think about student absenteeism, class-skipping and truancy and to obtain your suggestions for dealing with these problems. We also wish to get your views on the present recording of attendance and follow-up procedures and your suggestions for their improvement. Consequently your responses to the questions will be most helpful, and your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

All the responses will remain confidential and the respondents will remain anonymous.

When you have completed the instrument, seal it in the accompanying envelope and deposit it in the box marked Queen's University (Teacher Questionnaire) in the General Office. The envelopes will be collected by our Research Assistant in your school.

ONTARIO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROJECT

Teacher Questionnaire

OSAP School Code [1 2]

PART ONE

Instructions: Think of your school only. Please answer the following questions by entering the number which represent your choice of answer in the box provided.

1. a) Do most teachers take attendance regularly in their subject classes? 1. Yes 2. No [3]

   b) Are students most likely to come to subject classes when teachers take attendance regularly? 1. Yes 2. No [4]

2. Would the parents of your students be concerned if they found out that their son or daughter missed a school day without their permission. 1. Yes 2. No [5]

3. a) Do most teachers in your school care whether students are absent? 1. Yes 2. No [6]

   b) Do you think students are more likely to go to the classes in which teachers care about attendance? 1. Yes 2. No [7]

4. Are the rules and regulations concerning attendance and class-skipping well known by students? 1. Yes 2. No [8]

5. a) In general would the parents of your students be concerned if they found out that their son or daughter skipped classes? 1. Yes 2. No [9]

   b) Do most teachers in your school care whether students skip classes? 1. Yes 2. No [10]

6. a) Do you think your school administrators care about class-skipping? 1. Yes 2. No [11]

6. b) Do you think your school administrators care about student absenteeism?

1. Yes
2. No

☐ 12

---

7. a) Do you think that the actions taken by your school to cut down on class-skipping are effective?

1. Yes
2. No

☐ 13

---

b) Do you think that the actions taken by your school to cut down on unexcused absences are effective?

1. Yes
2. No

☐ 14

---

8. Do you think going to school will help your students to obtain a good job later on?

1. Yes
2. No

☐ 15

---

9. If nobody made students come to school, how often do you think they would <u>want</u> to come anyway?

1. Never
2. Seldom
3. Often
4. Always

☐ 16

---

10. Students stay away from school for a number of reasons. Think of the students at your school. For each reason stated below write in the box the number which represents <u>how often</u> it is the reason for absence from school.

1. Seldom
2. Sometimes
3. Often
4. Very often

a) School is too boring..... ☐ 17

b) School is not meeting needs..... ☐ 18

c) Bad weather..... ☐ 19

d) Just didn't want to come..... ☐ 20

e) To avoid taking a test or exam..... ☐ 21

f) Too sick to come..... ☐ 22

g) Problems at home..... ☐ 23

h) Going somewhere with friends..... ☐ 24

i) Failing in school..... ☐ 25

---

11. How would you rate the level of class-skipping in your school?

1. Low
2. Below average
3. Average
4. High
5. Very high

☐ 26

---

12. How would you rate the level of absenteeism in your school?

1. Low
2. Below average
3. Average
4. High
5. Very high

☐ 27

- 4 -

Instructions: Each of the statements below says something about students' feelings toward school and school work. Think of students in your school. Using the scale shown indicate the number which represents your choice of answer in the box provided.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

13. Students feel good about themselves when they do their school work well. ☐ 28

14. Generally speaking, the life of a student in this school is very satisfactory. ☐ 29

15. To students most school work seems useless or unimportant. ☐ 30

16. Students often talk of quitting school. ☐ 31

17. Students are generally satisfied with the kind of class work they do. ☐ 32

18. Students feelings generally are not effected by how well they do school work. ☐ 33

19. Most students in this school feel a great sense of personal satisfaction when they do their school work well. ☐ 34

20. Most students are very satisfied with this school. ☐ 35

21. Most students feel that school work is meaningless and unimportant. ☐ 36

22. Most students at this school feel badly or unhappy when they find out that they have done their school work poorly. ☐ 37

23. Most students find their school work to be very meaningful. ☐ 38

---

24. Using the scoring system shown indicate in the boxes provided how much you think students would like to have a) through f) below.

1	2	3	4	5
A very small amount	a moderate amount	an average amount	a large amount	a very large amount

a) Interesting and challenging work..... ☐ 39

b) Chances to try out their own ideas in school work..... ☐ 40

c) Opportunities to learn new things..... ☐ 41

d) A sense of accomplishing something worthwhile..... ☐ 42

e) Chances to use their imagination in school work..... ☐ 43

f) Opportunities to develop and improve himself/herself as a person..... ☐ 44

PART THREE

Instructions: In this section we wish to obtain your perceptions of the adequacy of the recording of absenteeism and tracking of students, and your suggestions for improving these school procedures. Write your comments in the space provided.

25. Indicate the extent to which you think that school attendance registers accurately reflect total absenteeism from school. [ ] 45

26. a) How many times could a student skip your classes before you would consider it a serious matter? [ ][ ] 46 47

b) How many days could a student be absent from school before you would consider it a serious matter? [ ][ ] 48 49

27. a) What are your suggestions for reducing class-skipping in your school?

b) What suggestions do you have for reducing student absenteeism in your school?

28. What are your suggestions for the improvement of the recording of attendance and follow up procedures?

29. What suggestion do you have for the improvement of the recording of class-skipping and follow up procedures?

Thank you

ATTENDANCE DATA CODING FORM: INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

For each student in the school record the following data on the coding sheet:

1. a two-digit school code number in columns 1,2.
2. A unique four-digit identifying number right justified in columns 3-6.
3. The number of the card 0-9, if more than one card is needed, in column 7.
4. If the student dropped out during the 1977-78 school year, enter the digit 1 in column 8.
5. According to whether the student is male or female enter the digit 1 or 2 in column 9.
6. Enter the two-digit grade number in columns 10,11 where 00 indicates "kindergarten" and 14 indicates "special education.
7. Enter the dates of absences in 4-column fields starting at column 12. The number of the month should be entered, right justified, in the first two columns of a field and the day of the week in the second two columns.

ONTARIO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROJECT

SCHOOL _____ CODED BY _____

	School Code		Student Sequence Number				Card No.	Dropout 77-78	Sex	Grade 00-K 14 Special		MM/DD				MM/DD				MM/DD				MM/DD				MM/DD				MM/DD				MM/DD				MM/DD				MM/DD				MM/DD			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55
1																																																				
2																																																					
3																																																				
4																																																				
5																																																				
6																																																				
7																																																				
8																																																				
9																																																				
10																																																				
11																																																				
12																																																				
13																																																				
14																																																				
15																																																				
16																																																				
17																																																				
18																																																				

37A